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Turkish Outbound Exchange Students' Intercultural Competencies at Different Stages of the International Sojourn

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**Turkish Outbound Exchange Students' Intercultural
Competencies at Different Stages of the International Sojourn**

Esin Aksay Aksezer

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"Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends." Maya Angelou

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The State of International Education in Different Parts of the Globe

Transnational education activities, defined as international education, global programs, or global immersion, have increasingly dominated the education outlook and translated as different cross border programs for students, faculty and staff. Wilson (2013) suggested that international activities will continue to undertake different forms, strategic thinking will be necessary, and the gap between developing-developed countries may widen. Higher education institutions mostly depend on creating opportunities for its members whereas governments/national agencies focus on the promotion of their higher education areas for global competitiveness and international organizations refer to the importance of having globally minded citizens of the world. International/global education opportunities have become one of the most pronounced agenda items of the higher education outlook, starting from mainly the US but expanding over a vast geography, which in turn translates into numerous opportunities in conventional and/or innovative ways at the institutional, national, and/or interstate level (Altbach, 2013, 2014; Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Bourne, 2011; Teichler, 2009). Internationalization is briefly defined as international, intercultural, and global dimensions in the philosophy and delivery of higher education (ASHE Report, 2012, p. 12; Association of International Educators-NAFSA¹). Doerr & Suarez (2018) refer to global immersion and define it as deep involvement in international activities for a definite time of enrichment and luxury, allows study abroad students learn through interacting with others in a culturally different environment where the characteristics of such an activity are being enjoyable, under participant's control, new, involving interacting with distant local people with the intent to return home. Bell (2015, p. 2) states that "universities around the world are feeling the pressure to intentionally develop and implement comprehensive internationalization policies, further motivated by a variety of factors including competition and financial growth." It is also important to reflect on the terms internationalization, globalization, and Europeanization since they denote different kinds of movements albeit some commonalities. Teichler (2004, p. 4) discusses that internationalization refers to interstate crossings, globalization to supranational movements and Europeanization a more regional form of international activities. De Wit, Hunter, Johnson & Van Liempd (2013)

¹ Retrieved from: https://www.nafsa.org/About_Us/About_International_Education/

reflect on an outline of the trajectory of studies on the internationalization of education and particularly state their consent with the focus that moves away from internationalization as a set of activities towards seeing it as an encompassing process and concept meaningful for individuals and the society.

As De Wit, Hunter, Johnson & Van Liempd (2013) discuss internationalization is a global phenomenon with regional accents. Altbach & Knight (2007) emphasize academic internationalization at the EU level as part of the move to economic and political integration, starting with the Erasmus exchange program, and then expanding with the Bologna process to harmonize entire academic systems. With the changing socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances different actors have been employing different methods to provide such opportunities to the learners. The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Report (2012) discusses that in history, the purposes of study abroad and types of programs have been affected by different forces influencing higher education trends and institutions. It is possible to observe numerous types of programs in the global education scene very much in line with the macro level social, political and economic realities, referred to as short term or long term programs based on the study period but also with different names based on their content. For instance, until WW2 there were mainly three types of study abroad programs- Junior Year Abroad, faculty-led study tours, and short-term campus-sponsored programs- in the US, one of the leading actors of global education, whereas in the latter half of the 20th century nature and number of programs were diversified (ASHE, 2012). OECD (2012) draws attention to the physical and virtual mobility of students and faculty, incorporating intercultural and international dimensions into the curriculum, teaching, research and extracurricular activities that develop international and intercultural skills as well as more novel approaches such as off-shore campuses, joint programs, and distance learning. Regarding mobility, study abroad, conventional exchanges, summer programs, language programs, internships, volunteer activities, and joint/dual diploma programs are some of the mostly pronounced programs across a wide geography; however, as suggested by Altbach & Teichler (2001), exchange mobility programs have been driving forces of the internationalization process, bringing together individual efforts, national exchange agencies and institutions which in turn makes these programs one of the most popular ones. Wihlborg & Robson (2018) also refer to the growing and diversifying nature of international activities as well as academic mobility being an important aspect of these efforts.

As a result of the afore-mentioned transnational education activities and increased mobility, institutions are becoming increasingly more pluralistic than before. Griffith,

Wolfeld, Armon, Rios & Liu (2016) emphasize that increased internationalization of the higher education field calls for students who can develop their intercultural competence skills to interact with diverse bodies of peers, faculty members and thus make the most out of their university experience. Also, due to the historical and/or changing socio-cultural and political issues, societies and in turn educational institutions become more diverse by enrolling students from minority backgrounds. Having said this, international education/experience is generally assumed to provide intercultural experiences and gains via curricular and/or extra-curricular means; however, not every participant who benefits from international education can be considered culturally competent and not every international education environment can be defined as intercultural. Global knowledge and intercultural competence are pronounced to be increasingly important for individuals, institutions, and employers and they are also pronounced as crucial aspects of the 21st century skills (AACTE, 2010; Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios & Liu, 2016; OECD, 2016). For instance, a recent global research commissioned by the British Council surveyed employers working in public, private, and non-profit organizations in nine countries. The results revealed that employers appreciate intercultural competence as a business value and believed that “policy makers and education providers could do more to contribute to the development of a workforce with the necessary intercultural skills through interventions ...” (British Council & Ipsos Public Affairs, 2013, p. 3). Looking at the issue from a broader perspective, as the UNESCO report suggests, “Inevitably, cultural boundaries are shifting, therefore the pace of social transformations is increasing. As a result, cultural diversity and intercultural contact have become facts of modern life, so intercultural competences become a requisite response (UNESCO, 2009, p. 7).” Along similar lines, as the OECD Report (2016) advocates, young people need to collaborate with others from different disciplines and cultures, they need to bring judgment and action to difficult situations where people’s beliefs and perspectives do not align, and they need to identify cultural traits, biases, and recognize the fact that their understanding of the world is partial.

One particular formation of the afore-mentioned cross border activities is the European education, training, and youth programs which focus on individuals, institutions as well as acquiring/developing global citizens of Europe and the world. The European Commission promotes a number of key competences for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship; accordingly, cultural

awareness and expression is stated as one of the key items.² Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008, 9-10) stated that "achieving inclusive societies needs a new approach, no sphere should be exempt, the challenge of living together in a diverse society could only be met by living together as equals in dignity, and intercultural dialogue is the route to follow". As such, higher education institutions are stated to have an important role in fostering intercultural dialogue via curricular and extra-curricular means, as actors in broader society and as sites where intercultural dialogue is put into practice by the afore-mentioned report. Being the flagship program that has influenced considerable number of countries, beneficiaries, and institutions, Erasmus program is definitely an important tool for achieving cultural awareness and expression (Aksoy, Uzunoğlu & Yaman Akyar, 2017). The European Association for International Education (EAIE) suggested the International Student Mobility Charter in 2012, which defined intercultural competences as the "recognition of one's own cultural and national perspectives, an awareness and respect for other perspectives, and the ability to communicate successfully across cultural differences" and suggested that mobile students should be equipped with intercultural preparation, advice on intercultural awareness, and support with reintegration upon return.

It has become a conventional practice to implement international programs to keep up with current trends at the higher education level. Educational mobility has increasingly been a phenomenon in the recent decades and refers to both foreign degree-seeking and temporary mobile students (Gürüz, 2011; Teichler, 2012). There is a wide variation in programs, participants, and funders; however, at the same time some well-known projects, programs, and actors continue dominating the global education movements. This study aims to focus on one of these influential programs, the European level student exchange program Erasmus³, to better understand and elaborate on the intercultural competence of participants from Turkey, right at the periphery of Europe since for Turkish students it is the single most popular opportunity across the country.⁴ Intercultural competence has traditionally been an understudied subject vis-a-vis the status of students from Turkey. Similarly, cultural experiences of (exchange) students from Turkey have not received meticulous attention until

² https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/competences_en

³ The Erasmus Program (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was launched in 1987 and since its inception provided opportunities to many European citizens (students, teachers, volunteers, faculty members etc.) to benefit from international experiences in an evolving fashion, introducing new schemes with each project cycle throughout the years.

⁴ Exchange program, study abroad program and sojourn are used interchangeably throughout this study.

the recent years. Focusing on these issues provides a perspective on the competencies and experiences of youth in light of the afore-mentioned global agenda and challenges. Having close ties with the European geography and actors as well as facing an EU membership perspective, it is also essential to explore the positionality of youth vis-à-vis concepts that increasingly dominate the transnational space across Europe. This study mainly focuses on Turkish students who studied in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland. Three of the founding fathers of the EU, Germany, the Netherlands and France, have historically faced several migration flows from Turkey⁵. These countries, along with Poland, are also amongst the most popular study destinations for students from Turkey⁶ -- for Germany and the Netherlands, Turkey is one of the top 5 sending countries.⁷ There are a number of reasons to explain the interest towards these countries: 1- France and Germany traditionally belong to the league of host destinations for international students (British Council, 2017; Altbach & Teichler, 2001); 2- There is a tradition of French and German high schools in Turkey as well as degree programs offered in these languages besides Turkish and English. 3- Institutions in the Netherlands have increasingly been offering English-language curricula across numerous disciplines and locations. 4- More Dutch institutions have become part of the international rankings, which makes the country a very popular study destination. As opposed to views that advocate “advanced” European countries as more viable education providers, new popular destinations started to emerge as well; more specifically, countries like Poland are increasingly seen as appealing destinations for international students. Poland, as the country that hosted the highest number of students from Turkey,⁸ became a very popular destination due to the increasing number of English courses, flexible course offerings, and support systems provided to incoming international students. Poland’s light procedures, good academic programs in English, modest living costs and openness to cooperate with Turkish universities are also suggested to be the reasons of this demand (ESI Report, 2014).

1.2 Critical Approaches to Global Education Opportunities

It is common to come across optimistic discourses on global education that promote international education opportunities as neutral and inevitable responses to the socio-political concerns of our current times, towards realizing personal, interpersonal and societal gains across different geographies; however, it is also crucial to consider (the less common) critical

⁵ Retrieved from: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-expatriate-turkish-citizens.en.mfa>

⁶ Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en#tab-1-5

⁷ Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en#tab-1-5

⁸ Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en#tab-1-5

approaches developed to better situate and understand outcomes and impact at different levels. For instance, while discussing the impacts of such programs as well as the positionality of numerous actors, it is essential to identify the way differences are being constructed, to question the detailed nature of immersion/study abroad as well as consumerist approaches. It is possible to apply critical approaches to the implementation of international/exchange programs in Turkey since these programs became an important tool for promotion and student satisfaction for the higher education institutions and a political tool for the policy makers towards showcasing the higher education system at the world stage.

Hebert & Abdi (2013) underline four major critical interpretations of global education that are also interrelated: 1- World Culture approach that states Western mass schooling is to serve as a model for national school systems; 2- the World Systems approach defines two major unequal geographical zones with the core instilling its values to peripheral countries; 3- Post-colonialist theory that sees globalization as a result of the economic and political agendas of major world powers on the global society; 4- Culturalist views that emphasize the existence of diverse and alternative forms of knowing the world. Considering the general flow of mobility especially towards certain geographies as well as influential actors of the field, the afore-mentioned system level critiques prove to be useful in evaluating the bigger picture of global education flows and schemes. Doerr (2017, pp. 100) refers to politics of difference and explains that it is important to be aware of politics of difference and situate “various types of constructed differences – study abroad destinations, immigrants’ original homeland, and minority cultures – in equal terms, all worthy of being learned”. She further argues that study abroad privileges difference in the name of learning. Bell (2015) reviewed influential work that has developed several lines of critiques towards global education ranging from ethical concerns to numerous reasons behind such activities, including financial impetus, competition and prestige, governmental pressure, and a movement advancing the ideal of the greater good of public higher education. The ASHE Report (2012) suggests that the critiques of study abroad refer to the following issues: study abroad as a political tool/an instrument of cultural and economic imperialism, exclusivity of programs in serving wealthy white students from elite colleges, study abroad as an example and tool of consumerism, and the ways in which global citizenship is framed. From a consumerist approach, Bolen (2001) refers to study abroad programs resembling tourist packages that include preparations for food, lodging, and visits to popular attractions in the country where participants buy the program to experience the full flavor of the country they study on their plates. Despite the increasing scope and size of international efforts, limited number of universities considers developing intercultural

competences as an intrinsic value and implements clear plans as well as assessments (Deardorff, 2006; Schmidt & Pardo, 2017). There are limited studies that refer to the negative or inflated aspects and outcomes from a human capital approach (Schmidt & Pardo, 2017) or from cultural capital and inequalities points of view (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012).

1.3 Overview of the Research

It is important to start reviewing literature with situating various approaches to identity to better explain students' positionality, discussing various approaches to the definition and conceptualization of intercultural competence and then continuing with published studies on exchange students in Turkey and abroad. The review of literature also includes the socio-cultural and political background in Turkey that shapes students' lives, including an overview of the higher education system and prevalent debates. The subsequent chapters include Research Methods, pre-departure analysis, post-departure analyses, and conclusion/discussion. The first empirical chapter explores results of the pre-departure survey whereas the second empirical chapter explores results of the post-experience assessment (qualitative and quantitative), including mainly the interviews, qualitative data from the surveys, social media notes, and pre/post-test comparisons. The final chapter summarizes key findings and provides a detailed discussion of these findings in light of the aims of the research.

Chapter 2: Intercultural Competence Development of Erasmus Students

There are different processes and actors involved in the intercultural competence development of Erasmus students/sojourners including the global and local sociocultural environments and students' personal as well as collective capital attained via various means. This chapter starts with a general review of the transnational education movements in Europe and Turkey's position within this frame to better reflect the background against/in which students develop their intercultural experiences. After providing the context on European education movements and opportunities, the second sub-section focuses on different approaches to the study of identity as they relate to international/exchange students since (re)identification emerge as an important outcome of cross cultural encounters. Then, another sub-section discusses influential models of intercultural competence and how these relate to understanding the positionality of sojourners. In the following sub-section, there is a detailed discussion of previous research on exchange/study abroad students in different parts of the world towards explaining numerous facets of the sojourn and emerging themes. Finally, the Turkish socio-cultural and political outlook will be discussed to describe the dominant culture in which the study design takes place and students receive education.

2.1 Transnational Education Movements in Europe and Turkey

In explaining the change in Europe as well as the meaning of Europe, Leontidou (2004) refers to three important periods that influenced boundaries as well as descriptions of Europe- mythical narratives around the Mediterranean, medieval period, and postwar narratives- and discusses that 'Europe' is a cultural and political construct that materializes in line with the political circumstances, power relations, geopolitics, and cultures. In spite of all the crises and disagreements, Europe is still in the process of transforming itself, which affects every aspect of the economic, social, political and cultural life. This perspective affects education, youth, and culture related fields drastically as member states as well as associate countries feel the need to align policies and implementations in line with new standards. The dynamic and complex relationship between the national and supranational/transnational/European is one of the main discussion points when it comes to education and training policies across the continent. K  n  roĖlu (2015) explained that even though the concept of transnationalism has been mostly used vis-  -vis defining migrants' connections with host countries and ethnic origins, the term has also been used in a broader

sense to refer to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. In referring to the developments in Europe, Soysal (2002) suggested that the transnational must be reconceptualized as integral to national and both concepts should be considered as constitutive of each other. Yağmur & Küeppers (2014, p. 9) explained that “major changes in the form and type of international mobility have led to the development of concepts such as a transnational citizenship and transnational multiple identities. Inhabitants of Europe no longer identify exclusively with singular nation states, instead give increasing evidence of multiple affiliations.”

As Teichler (2012) explained, developments in Europe are significant that started with increasing mutual understanding in the 1950s and continued with increasing student enrolments, initiation of the Erasmus program, pursuing similar higher education policies and a system convergence through the Bologna Declaration. As has been advocated by Coulby (2002, p. 41), “Higher education institutions are setting up international networks of various sorts such as research and mobility partnerships at departmental/institutional levels. There is the emphasis for knowledge economy, increased information sharing and an associated international educational space that is beyond the nation-state all over the globe.” Teichler (2009, 94) explains that “Internationalisation of higher education became a key issue in debates and policies in the 1990s. Experts agree that the single strongest driver for this emphasis was the success story of the ERASMUS programme, which has successfully stimulated and supported temporary mobility of students within Europe.” Launched in 1987, it has become the most popular educational opportunity in Europe and all youth, training, educational programs have been named after it as of 2014. The current project cycle 2014-20 targets over 4 million beneficiaries overall and 2 million at the higher education level.⁹ For Erasmus participants, despite faced difficulties, the time abroad has usually been viewed as an exciting and rewarding experience all over the continent. As the European Commission promotes

“Erasmus provides a wealth of new experiences for young people. For some, it is a passport to a first-ever trip abroad. Erasmus is about learning how to live in a multicultural environment, dealing with unfamiliar problems and coping with pressure. It introduces students to new teaching methods and topics, widening their horizons about how and what to study, and what career path to pursue. The international experience and skills they gain improve their self-confidence and job prospects. Erasmus is also about making friendships and feeling part of

⁹ European Commission Erasmus Facts and Figures. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/library/erasmus-plus-factsheet_en.pdf

an international 'family' – something which unites all of the students featured in this special supplement.”¹⁰

According to the typical Erasmus student profile information published by the European Commission, 61% are women, 67% study at the bachelor and 29% study at the master levels, 31% study in the fields of Social Science, Business or Law and 17 % in Engineering and 17% in Humanities and arts. The average period on exchange is 6 months, and the average age is 23 years. Students are equipped with skills that boost employability: problem solving, confidence, adaptability, and curiosity.¹¹ The European Commission’s publication “Erasmus – Changing lives, opening minds for 25 years” advocates that the program’s success led to the following measures at the European level: Launch of the Bologna Process, establishment of the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS), Internationalization of higher education, new and improved services, methods of learning and of teaching and working in HEI, as well as new forms of cross border cooperation.

Turkey has been an active player in the international education arena and, excluding the individual internationalization efforts of leading higher education institutions, has largely assumed her part in the transnational education movements especially as of 2004 with the impetus of the European Education and Training Policies and the Bologna Process. Thus, the higher education institutions from Turkey, being at the nexus of national transformation as well as global and European level implementations, are no exception to the afore-mentioned educational transnational movements (Aba, 2013; Kaya, 2015; Yıldırım & İlin, 2017; Yılmaz Fındık, 2016). The annual change in numbers shows a steady increase (Table 2.1). In spite of all the challenges and criticism associated with the Bologna Process, student mobility, a crucial dimension/tool of this process, has been very well received by multiple parties as can be seen in the rapid expansion and recognition throughout the country. Additionally, beneficiaries generally report positive feedback in terms of having access to opportunities as well as learning outcomes at different levels which will be discussed in detail in the coming sections. Aba (2013) mentions that, as in the case of other European countries, the Bologna Process also speeded up developments of the Turkish higher education system. Consequently, internationalization and mobility in higher education gained considerable popularity after the Erasmus program (Aba, 2013; Turkish National Agency Impact Assessment, 2009). The mid-term evaluation report, submitted to the European Commission by relevant Turkish

¹⁰ Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/erasmus-3-million_en

¹¹ European Commission Statistics. Infographics 2013-14. Retrieved from: <http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/images/infograph/2016-erasmus-student-profile.jpg>

authorities, on the implementation and outcome of various lines of project activities within the European framework reflects the key position of the program for individuals and institutions:

“Erasmus+ is a comprehensive programme having considerable effect on developing cross-cultural understanding and internationalization for the Turkish beneficiaries. In addition to enabling communication in EU languages, Erasmus+ has also contributed to individuals and institutions to gain prestige through increased cooperation with the EU countries.” (National Report on Erasmus+ Midterm Evaluation, 2017, p. 6).

Regarding access to international education opportunities, as the National Agency impact assessment revealed (2009, p. 61) “few respondents were used to travel abroad for educational purposes prior to becoming a beneficiary of the programme” and “85.4% of the respondents agree that it would not have been possible for them to obtain international experience in the absence of this programme”.

There are a number studies on the individual and system level challenges that adversely affect the internationalization agenda in Turkey within the European framework. Teichler (2004) advocated the importance of systemic and mainstreamed internationalization efforts while discussing the situation in different parts of the world; however, for the Turkish case, it is still difficult to talk about a comprehensive internationalization strategy and associated activities at different institutional realities (Yılmaz Fındık, 2016). In spite of the increasing numbers, in 2012 only 14,412 Turkish students embarked on the Erasmus student exchange scheme. Their share among all Turkish students was 0.3%, the lowest ratio among all 33 participating countries (ESI Background Paper, 2014). When the number of Erasmus students in 2012-13 is compared to the total number of graduates of the same year, the European average is 4.88% and Turkey is below this European average.^{12 13} Another concern that adversely affects mobility activities is the discrepancy between incoming and outgoing students. From institutional and individual perspectives, previous studies that focused on the reasons of low participation in Turkey mention concerns regarding visa regulations, financial insufficiencies, lack of foreign language skills for outbound students, scarcity of courses in foreign languages, misuse of recognition tools at the institutional level (European Stability Initiative Report, 2014; Yağcı, 2010; Yaprak, 2013). Oğuz (2011) underlined the fact that outbound students outweigh inbound students in Turkey and suggests a number of

¹² Retrieved from:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-facts-figures_en.pdf

¹³ The top 5 for the 2012-13 are Luxemborug, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/images/infograph/2016-erasmus-maps.jpg

institutional reforms for the universities such extending closer relations, curriculum development and efficient recognition of credits, promotion of linguistic diversity, and increasing investments. There are also studies that underline concerns about the Bologna Process, the European higher education reform agenda that is closely associated with the Erasmus program. Yağcı (2010) explained the smooth and rapid introduction of the structural reforms in Turkey at the macro level but suggested hesitations at the implementation level. In a similar fashion, Onursal-Beşgöl (2017) explained the top-down nature of change associated with the process, which complicates real internalization. Kaya (2015) discussed that the most common criticisms directed towards the process were on standardization and commercialization, students opposing the dominant political rule, left wing students opposing market driven and neo-liberal implementations, and rising Euroscepticism.

TABLE 2.1^{14, 15, 16} Erasmus Program Beneficiaries in Years

Project Cycles of the EU Education & Youth Programs	Academic Years	Erasmus Students-TR	Erasmus Students-Europe
Erasmus+	2016	16,089	303,880
	2015	14,665	291,383
	2014	11,910	305,265
Life-long Learning Program (LLP)	2013-2014	15,060	272,497
	2012- 2013 ¹	14,412	268,143
	2011-2012	11,826	231,408
	2010-2011	10,095	231,408
	2009-2010	8,758	213,266
	2008-2009	7,784	198,523
	2007-2008 ²	7,119	182,697
	2006-2007	4,438	159,324
	2005-2006	2,852	154,421
Socrates 2-Erasmus	2004-2005	1,142	144,037
	2003-2004 ³	N/A	135,586
	2002-2003 ⁴	N/A	123,957
	2001-2002	N/A	115,432
	2000-2001	N/A	111,092
	1999-2000	N/A	107,666
Socrates 1- Erasmus	1998-1999	N/A	97,601
	1997-1998	N/A	85,999
	1996-1997	N/A	79,874
	1995-1996	N/A	84,642
	1994-1995	N/A	73,407
Erasmus	1993-1994	N/A	62,362
	1992-1993	N/A	51,694
	1991-1992	N/A	36,314
	1990-1991	N/A	27,906
Erasmus	1989-1990	N/A	19,456
	1988-1989	N/A	9,914
	1987-1988	N/A	3,244

1- 3 million participant milestone was reached.

2- Traineeships included as a mobility scheme.

3- Turkey joined the pilot implementation in 2003 and started with the country-wide implementation in 2004.

4- 1 million participant milestone was reached.

¹⁴ Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en#tab-1-5

¹⁵ The Erasmus program has gone through several phases: 1- Erasmus 1987/88 – 1989/90 (3 years) 2- Erasmus 1990/91 – 1994/95 (5 years) 3- Socrates I – Erasmus 1995/96 – 1999/00 (5 years) 4- Socrates II – Erasmus 2000/01 – 2006/07 (7 years); 5- 2007/08 (7 years) – 2013/14 Lifelong Learning 6- 2014-15 – ongoing Erasmus+.

¹⁶ In 2003-04, 1982 HEIs had a charter and 1570 were sending/receiving students; in 2013-14, 4919 HEIs had a charter and 3595 were sending/receiving students. During the first year, 65 Turkish universities benefited from the program, in 2014, the number of beneficiary universities increased to 161. 164 of 179 higher education institutions have a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and fully participate in the Erasmus+ program.

(Retrieved from: <http://www.ua.gov.tr/docs/default-source/baskanlik/turkish-higher-.pdf?sfvrsn=0> and http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-facts-figures_en.pdf)

2.2 Identity Issues in International Education Contexts

Identity discussions are an integral part of the debates on Europe and education in general since these processes are very much related to the formation of new identities, transformation of the existing ones as well as transmission of them. Erasmus study abroad, being at the nexus of these two fields, offers an extraordinary opportunity to better understand and explain the experiences of youth besides shedding light on macro level developments at the European and international levels. Understanding the exciting and puzzling interaction of identities and associated change make the course of the sojourn an interesting period to study. International students not only deepen their understanding of the “other” but also deepen their understanding of oneself in new contexts (Young, Natrajan-Tyagi, & Platt, 2015) and national home-based identity may not be the dominant or only form of identification and socialization (Gomes, Berry, Alzougool & Chang, 2014). Recognizing the emergence of new identity formations, Hebert, Wilkinson & Ali (2013) suggest that transcultural approaches offer new possibilities for the consideration of culture and cultural belonging, so that individual and collective identifications and differentiations are better understood. Brown & Brown (2013) mention that the study abroad experience could result in identity conflict as sojourners face a new culture with unfamiliar cultural norms as well as negative judgement of their national and cultural traits. Their findings show that students’ experiences result in re-identifying with the culture of origin, rejecting and correcting inaccurate judgements, resisting the discourse of western supremacy, and acquiescence with stigma. Moreover, as explained by Wan Shun (2004, p. 3), “people belong to more than one social category or cultural group that may be more or less in conflict with one another, and these people often feel the need to negotiate between various discourse practices”. Acculturation strategies are also related to identity since identification affects the ways in which people move across different cultural spheres. On a practical level, identity helps to measure the acculturation process of those who move between different places and the outcome (Adams & Van de Vijver, 2017). Taking into consideration such a multidimensional picture, this subsection aims to highlight some of the paradigms and influential work that might be helpful in understanding the exchange student identification, experience, and associated change during and after the experience. From a constructivist approach, considering sojourner identity in terms of individual’s relation and membership to numerous groups, inter and intra group dynamics as well as the fluid and dynamic nature of personal identities are valuable for the sake of this research.

Voicu (2013) explains two aspects of identity: the first one is ascribed that relates to receiving several roles in the social world and the second one is chosen where responsibilities are taken up voluntarily. Jones & Abes (2013) explain the different views on the conceptualization of identity and refer to the Enlightenment's linear development approach and "unfolding of the essential core of the self", sociological approach's influence of culture and interaction with the social world, and postmodernity's focus on changing, unstable, and fragmented identities. Within this trajectory, one of the most crucial and stimulating discussions of the field is the essentialism-constructivism dialectic. Berg-Sorensen, Holtug & Lippert-Rasmussen (2010) underline that an essentialist position entails stereotypical and/or partially self-fulfilling generalizations about what it is to belong to a certain race, culture, or religion that oppress them whereas constructivism is perceived as liberating because it stresses identity as being under constant change. From a more constructivist perspective, Hall (1996, p. 17) describes identities as not essentialist but rather "strategic, positional, increasingly fragmented and fractured, subject to radical historicization and transformation." It is also important to consider Bourdieu's work in explaining identities since his work not only highlights but also offers an explanation to the dialectic between essentialist and constructivist processes. According to Bourdieu (1984) individuals do not move about in social space randomly because they are subject to the forces which structure this space and they resist these forces with their inertia, their properties (in embodied form, as dispositions, or in objectified form, in goods and qualifications).

Young et al. (2015) refer to the work of influential scholars in reflecting different dimensions of identity such as self-image (Onorato & Turner, 2004) and self-concepts (Bailey, 2003), self-categorization in marking personal and social identities (Turner, 1984), and identity as a goal and state to be achieved within the trajectory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968). One of the influential conceptual frameworks to consider is social identity theory. Tajfel & Turner (2004, p. 283) explain the formation of different groups by means of "categorization, identification and comparison" reinforced with membership to social categories sharing common grounds and involvement as well as marking similarities or differences. According to Verkuyten (2005), the social identity concept, depending on numerous factors, such as the stage of life, social networks and societal/cultural differences, defines who a person is and how people are socially defined regarding categorical characteristics (such as gender, age, and ethnic background) and distinguish a person from people that do not have the same characteristic. Phinney & Ong (2007) discuss the multifaceted and dynamic nature of ethnic identity and refer to self-

categorization, commitment and attachment, exploration, behavioral involvement, in group attitudes, ethnic values and beliefs, importance or salience of group membership, and ethnic identity in relation to national identity as crucial components. They further advocate that just like personal identity, ethnic identity also experiences developmental change through exploration and commitment.

As the study of identity is already complicated in a given time and space due to numerous social and personal dimensions, it becomes even more so in a transnational space with various international actors, influences, and processes. In explaining the complexity and multiplicity of the situation, Hayashi (2013, 50) suggests that “Because of the compression of space and time from transnational activities and mobility, immigrants, their families and international students are able to keep connected with their home cultures and languages.” which in turn results in the development of multiple identities among voluntary participants of transnational and multilingual activities. Young et al. (2015) discuss that most models that study the concept of identity were developed in a context that precedes globalization. In a similar discussion about the inadequacy of traditional models of identity, Van de Vijver, Blommaert, Gkoumasi & Stogianni (2015) refer to the inadequacy of social identity and collective identity theories since they cannot explain the existence of multiple and diverse identities (not just home and host). First originated in 1986 and then further developed in 1999 and 2005, the identity negotiation theory (INT) considers an individual’s multidimensional identities of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other categorization processes and suggests that individuals from different groups have the need for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels (Ting-Toomey, 2016).

2.3 Approaches to Intercultural Competence

Global knowledge, intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural communication/adaptation are some of the terms used when referring to knowledge, attitude and skills required for entering into and surviving in environments that involve different cultural groups and realities. Diversity observed in the terminology can also be traced in the definition of the concept. OECD Report (2017) focuses on “global competence” and refers to the importance of being able to analyze and understand multiple views, critical judgement, and appropriate interaction on the basis of respect for human dignity (Global Competency Report, 2017, p. 4). AEHE (2012, p. 3) offers the explanation that “Intercultural competence refers to the successful engagement or collaboration toward a single or shared set of goals between individuals or groups who do not share the same cultural origins or background.” As reflected in Deardorff (2006, p. 247), for the intercultural scholars, top-rated definition was “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes”. According to the afore-mentioned study of Deardorff (2006, p. 247), Byram’s (1997) definition was picked as the most applicable definition by practitioners in the field: “Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one’s self as well as linguistic competence.” What we can infer from previously suggested definitions is the emphasis on communication, global interaction, knowledge, and diversity.

Bolten’s (2007) threefold taxonomy suggests listing models (involving characteristics), structural models (involving assigning characteristics to affective, cognitive, and behavioral categories), and procedural models (involving connection with other core characteristics) (Schnabel, 2015), whereas Spitzberg & Changnon (2009) group contemporary models under five headings as compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal path models. Griffith et al. (2016, p. 2) explain that

“compositional models describe the characteristics (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) of ICC, co-orientational models describe the components/process of a successful intercultural interaction, developmental models describe ICC in terms of individual development over time, adaptational models combine the developmental components of the aforementioned models and present them in an interactional context of adapting to a foreign culture, and causal path models attempt to integrate the characteristics of compositional models and situate them in an interaction in which variables influence each other.”

Through the lenses of different models, it is possible to evaluate and understand various aspects of intercultural competence/communication. For instance, being a compositional model, Deardorff's Pyramid Model suggests lower levels of the pyramid (attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity) form a basis for the higher levels of skills (listen, observe, interpret, analyze, relate), knowledge (culture specific and sociological knowledge), desired internal (flexibility, adaptability, empathy) and external (behaving and communicating appropriately) outcomes (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Developmental models assist to better understand the change one demonstrates in time such as moving from an ethnocentric worldview towards an ethnorelative one or demonstrating U-curve/W-curve during and after the sojourn (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). For instance, according to Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, the process consists of six stages ranging from ethnocentric towards ethnorelative views (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) (Sinicrope et al., 2007, p. 8). Adaptational models assist to understand the adaptation processes one goes through (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009); for instance, taking into consideration the host and home society characteristics, it is possible to discuss whether there is separation, marginalization, integration or assimilation. Causal Path models map out different stages, involved actors and outcomes towards explaining antecedent factors, change process factors and outcome factors. For instance, in the Multilevel Process Change Model of Intercultural Competence, Ting-Toomey (1999) theorizes three sets of factors: antecedent (system level, individual level, interpersonal level), managing change process (managing culture shock, managing identity change, managing new relationships, and managing environment), and outcome factors (system level, interpersonal level, personal identity) (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 31). In the Process Model of Intercultural Competence, Deardorff (2006) developed a model that identifies attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity) and knowledge (cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic awareness) and skills (listening, observing, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, relating) components at the individual level which in turn lead to internal (shifts of internal frames that enhance empathy, ethnorelativity, and adaptability) and external outcomes (appropriate and effective behavior) at the interaction level (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 33). In comparing the effectiveness and shortcomings of each model, Navaitiene, Rimkeviciene & Racelyte (2013) explain that compositional models are useful in defining content but not relations amongst components; co-orientational models are useful in solving problems of interactions based on misunderstandings but do not work on processes; developmental models to understand progress in time but weak in specifying traits that facilitate learning; in the adaptational

models adaptation issue is the only concern; causal path models focus on causal interrelations between components but the weakness is that the model can be tested empirically.

Ruben (1976), cited in Sinicrope et al. (2007, p. 3), argued for the importance of behavior rather than intentions, understandings, knowledge, attitude or desires and offered the following dimensions: display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, self-oriented role behavior, interaction management, tolerance for ambiguity. On the other hand, Kim (1991) defined three dimensions that relate to the concept which are the cognitive dimension (interpretive mechanisms or structures that assign meaning to messages), the affective dimension (motivation or willingness to accommodate intercultural encounters), and the behavioral dimension (abilities to be flexible and resourceful in using cognitive and affective skills) (Williams, 2005). In a similar fashion, AEHE (2012) stated that intercultural competence can be understood in relation to cognitive, psychosocial (or intrapersonal), and interpersonal development. According to the conceptualization developed by Griffith et al. (2016), intercultural interaction involves three stages that are approach (positive cultural orientation, tolerance for ambiguity, and self-efficacy), analyze (self-awareness, social monitoring, perspective taking/suspending judgment, and cultural knowledge application), and act (behavioral and emotional regulation). Even though there seems to be a multitude of approaches and conceptualizations, some studies underline the fact that most models include similar dimensions, varying in emphasis and detail of the components (Demircioğlu & Çakır, 2016; Navaitiene, Rimkeviciene & Racelyte, 2013). The diversity observed in explaining and framing intercultural competence concept can also be observed in various assessment tools. Griffith et al (2017) offers a concise and through summary of the existing assessments of cross cultural competence which focus on global competencies/perspectives; adaptability/adjustment; personal characteristics such as interaction, empathy, open-mindedness, and flexibility; culture and work place; (inter)cultural intelligence including knowledge, attitude, behavior, and skills perspectives in a nutshell.

There are methodological and conceptual difficulties with the study of intercultural competence. Van de Vijver & Leung (2009) grouped challenges as conceptual-methodological, sampling-design, and assessment. One of the main challenges stems from the fact that there are a number of definitions and models that refer to the concept which is creating conceptual ambiguity (Schnabel, 2015). Secondly, the fact that a variety of programs and cultural contexts as well as implementation exist make the study of intercultural competence complex (ASHE, 2012; Kealey, 2015). Thirdly, ASHE Report (2012) discusses that it was not possible to know whether growth observed in mobile students compared to the

ones who stayed home was exclusively a function of studying abroad or a by-product of other features. Fourthly, Collier (2015) critiques the fact that some previous research approached culture as a nationally shared, homogenous, mental program developed through socialization, or as a communicative system associated with single and unitary group identification. There are also studies that discuss the variety of intercultural communication/competence contexts, changing nature of measurement as well as possible alternatives (Griffith et al 2016; Lieberman & Gamst, 2015). Particular challenges that lie with studying exchange students stem from the fact that their duration of stay may be various and short in a range of diverse programs and destinations as well as the existence of a number of assessment methods with different foci.

For the sake of this study, compositional and causal path models are considered feasible since they focus on different components and how they interact and influence different stages of the sojourn. This research considers intercultural competence as a multidimensional process involving cultural knowledge, skills, and behavior on issues relating to self and others in intercultural settings, highly affected by personal qualities as well as acquired socio-cultural capital and the contextual factors. Demircioğlu & Çakır (2016) state that most models include awareness of both self and of others, an open-minded attitude, intercultural knowledge, and skills that lead to effective communication and behavior as an outcome. For this reason, a holistic and multidimensional approach that takes account of students' background (socio-cultural, familial and institutional affiliations), self-knowledge/management, approach towards multicultural experiences, cultural knowledge, adaptability and flexibility towards various cultural situations and change, communication and social interaction in culturally diverse environments (including existence of/benefitting from various social networks and support, frequency/nature of intercultural contacts etc.), home and host domain factors, learning different aspects of a new socio-cultural environment (language, practical matters, relevant cultural information etc.), critical (positive and/or negative) incidents.

2.4 Research on Exchange/International Students

“My exchange affected my life in many ways. So many ways that I am not even aware of most of them, probably. What I do know is that it set me apart from other people, and not in the elitist kind of way.¹⁷ In a way that it makes you weird. You look like a social and open minded person, and people dig that. People admire your sense of adventure and think you are a cool person to hang out with because you have some nice stories. But the truth is that after a while you realize you just don’t really fit in. Anywhere. ... It makes me feel like I don’t fit in anywhere except with other exchange students.”¹⁸

Having explained the emergence and active implementation of international study abroad in different geographies as well as approaches towards intercultural competence, it is also essential to discuss the status and experience of different exchange/international students in different locations. Akıncı & Yağmur (2010) suggest that immigrants are confronted with a number of difficulties when they settle in a new environment such as having to learn a new language, adapting to a new culture, and experiencing unfamiliar institutions, structures and behaviors that may become stressful. Murphy-Lejeune (2004), in the first in-depth qualitative study of student migration within Europe, draws on the theory of ‘the strange’ and describes that the travelling European students can be seen as a new migratory elite even though they are temporary. She further suggests that the mobile student is in between being a transitory tourist and a migrant’s long term stay. Even though exchange students are not permanent immigrants at their study destinations, the processes they go through resemble immigrants’ challenges. They experience a new socio-cultural and educational setting for a definite period of time, which is supposed to involve leaving the familiar and get immersed into the unfamiliar. This transition between the familiar and unfamiliar could be enough to identify them as strangers; however, standardized implementations/information, students’ readiness and backgrounds, characteristics of the host destinations, continuous relations with home domains and/or ethnic cultural heritage via social media or other tools are given facts that may have drastic influence on the level of strangeness. Additionally, implementations at the European level have been standardized to a certain level and best practices have been shared throughout the continent all of which make the experience less unknown for all involved parties (institutions, participants, faculty members etc.). On another note, some of the popular discourses on study abroad outcomes and reasons of participation have been pronounced as improved communication/connectedness as well as increased understanding towards one’s

¹⁷ All citations from the informants are verbatim and were not corrected by the author.

¹⁸ This is an excerpt from a blog “Nationality Unknown” with the title “The identity crises that comes after your exchange”, which is about the feelings and thoughts of a former exchange student upon return to his/her home country. (Retrieved from: <http://www.nationalityunknown.com/identity-crisis-comes-exchange/>)

own culture and others'; however, the state of isolation described in the above-stated quote is very striking and demonstrates the complex web of relations students struggle with not just during the experience but also upon return, in a web of expanded spatial and temporal practices.

Exchange/Foreign Students in International Contexts

Kim (2017) provided a comprehensive definition of the sojourn as a process of stress, adaptation, and growth and explained that sojourners' individual predispositions (adaptive personality, personality strength, preparedness to adapt, differing degrees of ethnic proximity), host environment traits (conformity pressure, receptivity, ethnic group strength), communication (host communication competence, social communication with the hosts, (ethnic) interpersonal communication) as important factors. The conditions and outcomes of the study abroad experience are as diverse as the actors, processes and contexts involved. There are a number of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted with exchange/Erasmus/international students across a wide geography that can be framed under the following themes: motivational factors for study abroad, program outcomes, cultural issues, intercultural competence, socio-cultural networks and their influence on the sojourn, host country conditions, adaptation and acculturation process of sojourners. The scope and size of formerly conducted studies, which will be discussed in this section, are very different from each other; however, they provide valuable insight on the issues related to international exchanges. In their exploratory literature screening and analysis, Yemini & Sagie (2015) discussed the increase in the intensity of research in the field of internationalization of higher education and multicultural issues' percentage of appearance was 3.9%, where internationalization at home was the highest with 27.2% and student mobility was the second with 9.6%. The afore-mentioned study in a way underlines the understudied nature of multicultural issues.

In terms of motivational factors, there are studies that point at academic objectives, improving foreign language skills, leisure, search for independence, personal growth (Aresi et al., 2017) as well as the influence of social context in deciding to go on a study program (Ahn, 2014). Pirgaru & Turcan (2017) studied the pull-push factors amongst Moldovan students' study abroad process and identified lower quality of higher education as a push factor and high quality of education, lower tuition fees, feasibility of obtaining information, possibility to find a job after graduation, desire to improve language skills and experience different cultures, scholarship opportunities, prestige of the institutions, the range of courses/programs and the easy application process as host domain pull factors. ESN Survey

(2005) found that top motivations for going abroad were to practice a foreign language, acquire new experiences and enhance future career prospects, whereas for female students and students from Central-Eastern Europe academic objectives were also a strong source of motivation.

Receiving trainings at home and/or host destinations prior to the start of the study abroad period is a very common implementation. These trainings, often referred to as mandatory orientation sessions, may be for few days or longer, depending on the content and resource, and usually involve practical information about the host destination, formal procedures, language trainings, intercultural communication, meeting with local and/or other international students, and social activities. As can be traced from former work, having received and completed such trainings successfully may be an important determinant of a smooth transition and adaptation. Regarding pre-departure trainings and their influence over the sojourn period, Holmes, Bavieri & Ganassin (2015) found out that pre-departure materials can help students explore the diversity and complexity in themselves and others; however, primary needs for practical information should be sustained; interactive spaces for expressing emotion and feelings must be created as well as scaffolding activities that help students understand intercultural concepts. Ramos (2013) underlines the importance of orientations, including logistical, health and safety related issues, in helping students to learn before they depart and developing useful coping mechanisms for cultural adjustment. Summerfield (1993, p. 137) explains that pre-departure orientations are “to provide essential basic information, motivate students to learn more about the host culture and themselves, help students develop cross-cultural sensitivity and become familiar with cross-cultural adaptation, help students gain a better comprehension of world issues and examine their roles as global citizens”.

There are a multitude of outcomes of the study abroad ranging from behavioral and cognitive to attitudinal changes. Focusing on private life and European dimension, the Erasmus Impact Study (2016) emphasized that Erasmus students and alumni feel significantly more related to Europe than non-mobiles and Erasmus influences private life. Czerwionka, Artamonova & Barbosa (2015) found that students mostly mentioned knowledge related to people, daily life, interactions, values and politics, schedule, and big C and regarding change in intercultural knowledge, some themes were more noticeable in the beginning (city life, schedule) and most of them were more remarkable at the end. They further suggest changes in intercultural knowledge and knowledge growth related to all afore-mentioned themes. Focusing on professional gains, Teichler (2013) refers to learning from contrast, becoming competent in handling international tasks and foreign languages, and to be inclined for

mobility after graduation. Paige et al (2009) discuss that study abroad has an effect on global engagement (civic engagement, knowledge production, philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and voluntary simplicity) as well as on future educational and career choices. While juxtaposing positive and negative aspects of the experience, Cicchelli (2013) defines cosmopolitan promises of an Erasmus period as “flourishment of new personal capacities, unveiling of self, and socialization to difference” next to more negative aspects as being an emotionally charged period tearing down the traditional and well known and deceive expectations of a warm welcome. ASHE Report (2012), in a comprehensive fashion, refers to educational and developmental outcomes (identity recognition, intellectual development, academic interest/curiosity), general academic outcomes (grades, graduation rates, language proficiency, disciplinary knowledge, general learning outcomes) as well as functional knowledge of how to live and interact in other countries, global interdependence, knowledge cultural relativism, and world geography. Bachner & Zeuschel (2009) explained the positive and long-lasting attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive changes as a result of exchange and that the host family experience as well as longer duration of stay were influential aspects in enhancing the outcomes. Segawa (1998) study also revealed personal and intellectual growth albeit difficulties.

There are former studies that particularly focus on intercultural competence/communication. Terzuolo (2018) draws attention to the influence of pre-existing demographic characteristics and life experience in the development of intercultural mindsets; however, program characteristics may not result in the same outcome. Johnson, Heo, Reich, Leppisaari & Lee, 2015 underline outcomes in terms of achieving global minds by reflecting on the host society and developing novel meaning structures; making sense of educational systems and practices; living through the complexity of identity development and unexpected experiences; communicating with people using diverse approaches. Some studies focus on the duration of a sojourn and explain how different durations would affect the experience. Within this framework, Rahimian (2015) describes that exchange students may be perceived by others and themselves as temporary visitors who do not need to integrate and temporariness of the program may minimize communication with the host culture to avoid identity formation issues/problems and Zarnick (2010) revealed that the short-term experience had minimal impact on participants’ levels of intercultural sensitivity. There are also former studies that confirm students who study abroad exhibit a greater change in intercultural communication skills after their semester abroad than students who stay home (Williams, 2005) and exposure to various cultures/diversity of contact are the greatest influence for intercultural competence

(Salisbury, 2011; Stepanovienė, 2011; Williams, 2005). Salisbury (2011) suggests study abroad generated a statistically significant positive effect on intercultural competence; however, the same study also revealed that study abroad influences students' diversity of contact but does not have a statistically significant effect on relativistic appreciation of cultural differences or comfort with diversity.

As can be gleaned from student narratives and former research, language acquisition and/or progress is a central component of the study abroad debates and language presents to be an essential input and output of the experience. The results of the ESN Survey (2014) point at diverse methods of language improvement such as attending language courses, receiving education, practice, and tandem activities. Considering the motivations of students prior to attending the opportunity, the National Agency of Turkey Impact Study (2009) revealed that 54.1% of the respondents stated to be worried about sufficiency of foreign language skills prior to attendance and as they experienced, 84.5% started to think adequate foreign language capability was a precondition for an effective outcome. It is common to come across prescriptions for language improvement during study abroad that usually offer advice such as listening to local music, following local media, being distant to home country people, and communicating with the natives; however, prior research argues that language acquisition and improvement are far more complicated to understand and address. One automatically expects that having prior knowledge and experience with the language at the suggested level is important for a smooth transition, stay and study which in turn further improves with the experience; however, there are studies that disclose the intricate relationship between study abroad and linguistic gains. Dewey (2017) suggested that studying language usage and social interaction during study abroad is a challenge and further explained the former conventional studies that focus on social interaction (contact profile, language logs, social networks survey) as well as more recent innovations such as social media, photo elicitation, mobile phones, and computational tools. Sato (2014) studied Japanese students' language proficiency and second language identity construction and found that students became active in learning and using English by local interaction and exemplary people. He further suggests that when there are no unequal power relations, language learners can positively construct their second language identities. Savicki (2011) revealed that using the host culture language is advantageous in terms of early sociocultural adaptation, higher levels of psychological well-being, and higher affirmation of national identity; however, language proficiency seems to have no relationship to immersion, in terms of contact with U.S. peers and host nationals. Additionally, no student demographic variables correlated significantly with any of the language proficiency measures.

Magnan & Back (2007) studied whether social interaction is related to linguistic gain, looking at living situation, amount of social contact with native speakers and co-nationals, and amount of contact with local media. They concluded that language gain is possible during a study abroad, even in a one-semester program and with students who have intermediate proficiency; however, the living situation and contact with authentic media were not points of differentiation whereas prior coursework might be considered a differentiating factor. According to the afore-mentioned study, it was found that speaking French with Americans could impede proficiency.

One line of former research focuses on (negative) socio-cultural issues of the sojourn experience. In a study of the Erasmus Mundus graduate program and students' intercultural competence, Yarosha, Lukicb & Santibáñez-Gruberc (2018) defined six types of intercultural challenges, three of which were related to following a special graduate program in a few foreign universities and the other three were related to living abroad and changing countries. Sato & Hodge (2015) refer to social experiences that result in academic struggles such as social distance contributing to academic struggles, collectivism positioned against individualism, isolation in group discussions, and professors' negativity whereas Smith & Khawaja (2011) pronounce linguistic, socio-cultural, educational, practical stressors and discrimination to be some of the critical dimensions of a sojourn. Stepanovienė (2011) discusses cultural differences were regarded as a significant reason to communication difficulties (finding a suitable conversation topic, stereotypes against other cultures, culture shock and differences in politeness or misunderstandings of non-verbal communication). Natmessnig & Steinacher (2013) point at the gap between aims and outcomes and explain that students participate for the improvement of language skills, the eagerness to meet people with various backgrounds and the curiosity to get to know new cultures; however, considering the short period of stay, they do not acquire real integration into the host country culture and experience diverse intercultural encounters. From a social inclusion point of view, Cairns (2017) refers to inadequate level of Erasmus funding affecting participation and exchange students being perceived as tourists and consumers.

Acculturation refers to cultural change when different cultures come into prolonged and first-hand contact (Berry, 2008; Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011; Yu, 2011). Berry (2005) defines integration (maintaining heritage culture, combined with daily interactions with other groups), assimilation (not maintaining cultural identity and seeking daily interaction with other cultures), separation (keeping original culture and avoiding interaction with others), marginalization (little interest in heritage culture and having relations with others) as

strategies of ethno-cultural groups and explains multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation, exclusion as strategies of larger societies. Former studies point at different acculturation models such as unidimensional, bi-dimensional, and multidimensional (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Adams & Van de Vijver, 2017) and they also state that in studying acculturation of different groups (migrants, expats, refugees, international/exchange students), diverse circumstances (period, reasons, logistics etc.) must be considered (Adams & Van de Vijver, 2015; Cemalcılar, Falbo & Stapleton, 2005; Kuo, 2014; Thomas & Harrell, 1994). According to the Model of Acculturation (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006), the process of acculturation is a result of the interplay of acculturation conditions, acculturation orientations, and acculturation outcomes. Similarly, Ting-Toomey (1999) recommends three groups of factors to explain different stages of intercultural competence which are antecedent factors, managing change process and outcome factors (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). In a study of acculturation of exchange students, Van de Vijver & Galchenko (2006) refer to the antecedent conditions (participants' background/prior experiences, ethnic vitality, friendship networks, home-host domain resources), intervening conditions (coping and acculturation strategies) and outcomes (psychological and sociocultural adjustment).

Thomas & Harrell (1994) suggest acculturation/adjustment/adaptation may be used interchangeably whereas Pedersen et al. (2011) suggest adaptation can be conceptualized with 'acculturation' and Kim (2017, p. 3) explains that acculturation is partial acquisition of cultural traits and coping/ adjustment indicate psychological responses. There is considerable research on the acculturation and adjustment/adaptation of student sojourners. Some of the earlier studies on sojourner adjustment experiences were the U-curved shape of initial adjustment, crisis, regained adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955), a U-curve of honeymoon, crisis, recovery and adjustment stages (Oberg, 1960), a W-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) due to the second U-curve experienced upon return (Thomas & Harrell, 1994). There were debates about the applicability of U/W-curve models in explaining sojourners' experiences due to diversified home and host cultural realities, personal dispositions and temporal factors all of which make focusing on the process and actors crucial. Former studies underline the influence of ethnic visibility, cultural distance, gender differences, educational and linguistic background, or duration of stay over the acculturation/adjustment of sojourners. Tan & Liu (2014) study revealed a significant effect of ethnic visibility on acculturation orientations and stated that ethnically visible students score lower on host culture orientation and higher on heritage culture orientation. Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013) explored intercultural adjustment patterns and the resulting intercultural friendships and their findings uncovered a variety of

intercultural adjustment patterns, identity adjustment and communication shifts as well as the critical role of time in developing friendships and identity shock/friendship dialectics' patterns (feeling visible – feeling invisible, friendship openness-closedness, and feeling like a guest – feeling like an alien.) Pedersen et al. (2011) established a measure of sojourner adjustment composed of four positive factors (social interaction with host nationals, cultural understanding and participation, language development and use, host culture identification) and two negative factors (social interaction with co-nationals, homesickness/feeling out of place). Looking at gender based differences, Yu & Wang (2011) studied the preferences in acculturation strategies of Chinese students in Germany and they revealed that males preferred separation while females chose integration. Ward (2008) suggests that amongst research on acculturation, integration seem to be the strategy most preferred by sojourners, migrants, refugees and indigenous people. Van de Vijver & Galchenko (2006) found that a larger perceived cultural distance between mainstream and immigrant culture is associated with less psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Cemalcılar et al. (2005) suggest that international students are ready to adjust to the host culture with their education and linguistic skills; however, lack permanent support due to temporary stay which results in stronger home domain ties. In the study of Japanese female students' sojourn experience and adaptation, Segawa (1998) revealed that students without prior international experience were emotionally and physically vulnerable and the strong Japanese support affected relations with Canadian peers adversely.

Research on host country conditions is an important source to consider within the framework of international study programs. Vevere, Resentini, Alfaya & Muniz Mejuto (2017) studied socio-cultural adaptation in Latvia and their findings revealed a lack of crucial information about the host countries and universities as well as stages of culture shock (differences in lifestyle, food and dining traditions, difficulties in communication). ESN Survey 2016 focused on the international friendliness of European universities and underlined the importance of longer duration of stay, receiving introductory sessions, creating international friendly environment, faculty members' support, interacting with the locals, social programs/encounters, and re-entry programs. To test the effects of host cultures on acculturation patterns, Jang & Kim (2010) investigated the difference between students going to collectivist countries and individualist countries and found that for the individualist-bound students, personality is an important factor, while for collectivist-bound students, there was loyalty to cultural norms and values.

There are also former studies on social and cultural networks of sojourners and their effects on the sojourn. Berry & Sam (1997) and Ward & Kennedy (1994), quoted in Galchenko & Van de Vijver (2006, p. 183), state that “The concept of ethnic vitality refers to ethnic institutions that can support the acculturation process, such as the availability of places of worship, shops, recreational opportunities, and educational resources. Minority networks are often mentioned as an important source of support.” Galchenko & Van de Vijver (2006) also refer to the importance of three distinct social networks, each serving a particular function: “1- bonds with co-nationals (to rehearse, express, and affirm culture-of-origin) 2- links with host nationals such as students, teachers, and counselors (to facilitate the academic and professional goals of the students) 3- friendships with other non-compatriot foreign students (recreational and to provide mutual social support based on a shared experience of being foreign)”. The results of the ESN Survey (2008) indicate that students create more contacts with exchange students/other foreigners and even if it is a very sociable period of life, some students report (feeling of) isolation. In a similar fashion, ESN Survey (2015) revealed that 45% of mobile students socialized with international students only while 39% socialized with both international and local students. Cemalcilar et al. (2005) state the preference of international students to be friends with co-nationals or international students out of communication convenience as well as sharing a mutual experience as strangers; however, they also underline a number of research that claim remaining close to one’s culture of origin may actually retard adjustment to the new culture. In a similar fashion, Aresi et al. (2017) suggest that cross-cultural interest was negatively related to the acculturation orientation toward one’s home country, whereas it was positively related to the acculturation orientation toward the host country culture. Pedersen et al. (2011) also framed social interaction with co-nationals as a “negative factor” of adjustment due to findings that spending more time with home country nationals may lead to less satisfying and less culturally engaging experiences. Chi & Suthers’ (2015) findings indicate that having social relations within the community results in less difficulty with acculturation; however, contrary to expectations, social relations with co-nationals and host-nationals do not have significant impacts on one’s socio-cultural adaptation and ICC is distributed throughout members of a community rather than being an individual characteristic.

Exchange/Foreign Students in the Turkish Context

There are multiple lines of research on sojourners from Turkey that focus on motivational factors and program outcomes. Bozoğlu, Armağan & Güven (2016) identified five main themes in their study of motivational factors towards study abroad that include

language learning, personal growth, leisure, academic considerations, and career opportunities. Agreeing on the language learning aspect, Aslan & Jacobs (2014) also state living in a different culture as the main reason behind participation. Prior studies that focus on program outcomes reflect a range of issues. Focusing on teacher candidates' experiences, there are studies that report personal, linguistic, professional, academic, and (inter)cultural acquisitions (Demir & Demir, 2009; Ünlü, 2015). Parallel to the afore-mentioned studies, the Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey (2009), reports positive outcomes on personal development (self-expression, self-confidence, learning about him/herself, changing life trajectory), career development, language development and additionally suggests obtaining international experience (access/opportunity and learning about daily life). Kasapoğlu Önder & Balcı (2010) evaluated Erasmus program's contribution to personal development, satisfaction with various academic and non-academic (including financing, administration, accommodation, security issues) aspects and concluded that the program had positive influence.

Regarding cultural acquisitions and experiences of the programs, former studies focus on attitudinal, cognitive and/or behavioral change. Demir & Demir (2009) suggested decrease in prejudice in a study carried out with teacher candidates, Arslan (2013) suggested increased respect and tolerance, and the Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey (2009) reported positive outcomes on cross-cultural awareness and interaction (learning about national and foreign cultures, adapting to foreign cultures, overcoming prejudices, increasing tolerance, familiarizing others' with one's own culture). According to İltar (2013) students developed their personal beliefs, values, cross-cultural knowledge and knowledge about their own culture, and the experience made students more enthusiastic, tolerant and open-minded. Ünlü (2015) findings revealed intercultural experiences and observing multicultural structures as the key outcomes. Kağıtçıbaşı (1978) studied the effects of sojourn on the attitudes of young Turkish students studying a year in the US and certain attitude changes were reported as a result of the experience which were mainly decrease in authoritarianism and religiosity and increase in world-mindedness and to a lesser degree in belief in internal control and perceived family control.

Being a candidate country to becoming an EU member, accession talks and debates are an important part of the political, financial circles as well as daily lives in Turkey. Because of the heated debates about the relationship between Turkey, EU countries and EU institutions, policies, procedures, and developments on these issues are observed closely by different stakeholders. Being part of the EU education policies, Erasmus program and

Bologna Process are no exception to the ongoing discussions. There are former studies that also focus on students' thoughts on the EU. Demirkol's (2013) study stated that the Erasmus students see Turkey as part of the EU, think Turkey's accession to the EU would favor the mutual comprehension of European and Muslim values and a big majority approve the accession of Turkey to the European Union. In Arslan (2013), thoughts on the European Union and multiculturalism were examined, and it was concluded that most of the participants had positive opinions. The Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey (2009) also evaluated participants' views towards the EU and the results revealed that the answers were not as positive as contributions of the program and there were more undecided participants with respect to questions on EU membership.

Besides the positive outlook associated with the afore-mentioned international experiences, there is also an ample number studies that describe and analyze challenges. These may be summarized as inadequate language skills, cultural difficulties (bias and differences), perceptions on the home country, and difficulties associated with the implementation of the program. There are studies that mention concerns regarding visa regulations, financial insufficiencies, lack of foreign language skills for outbound students, scarcity of courses in foreign languages for inbounds, and misuse of recognition tools at the institutional level (ESI Report, 2014; Yağcı, 2010; Yaprak, 2013). In the quantitative Impact Assessment (2009) of the National Agency of Turkey, challenging issues emerged as delays in grant payment, obtaining visas, misguidance by home institution faculty members and international offices. Önen (2017) categorized and defined challenges associated with different phases of the sojourn as pre-departure (paper work, selection of courses, communicating with the Erasmus offices, visa procedures, accommodation), during sojourn (communication and socializing, different education systems, language problems, economic problems, culture shock) and after the sojourn (post-Erasmus syndrome). Karatekin (2017) studied Turkish Erasmus students' global citizenship who study in Poland and suggested that they have an intermediate level of global citizenship besides receiving the lowest score from global civic engagement sub-dimension. Ersoy (2013) studied cultural problems of teacher candidates and reported problems regarding communicating in English effectively, cultural differences, and cultural bias in their cross-cultural experiences. Brown & Aktaş (2011) found students to be anxious prior to the experience about the quality of accommodation, their language ability, the opportunity to form friendships, and possible misconceptions about Turkey as a Muslim and developing country. In a study that was carried out with inbound and outbound exchange students, Bozkaya & Aydın (2010) investigated anxiety regarding

intercultural communication and their findings revealed that Turkish and European students had lower communication apprehension than Asian students and students with lower anxiety were academically more successful. Duru & Poyrazlı (2007) suggested that higher levels of social connectedness and English competency decreased acculturative stress, indicating that providing Turkish students opportunities to interact with others and increasing their social connections with social and academic environments might help them cope with acculturative stress.

Research that focus on the adaptation of Turkish students generally suggest a positive overall adjustment with some aspects that require further attention and improvement. Mutlu's (2013) study, conducted amongst EU Program Coordinators of European universities' coordinators, stated that informants approached Turkey's participation positively and generally believed students' academic, cultural, social, economic, and religious adjustment was positive. However, the same study also mentioned that students' English language skills were inadequate. Along similar lines, Şahin (2017) discussed Turkish students' positive cross-cultural adaptation but underlined the difficulty with foreign language skills. Moreover, the author explained that coming from a teacher-centered education context, students might have difficulty adapting to the unfamiliar and should be in a wide range of social contacts to overcome adaptation concerns (Şahin, 2017, p. 8). As Erdem Mete (2017) referred to the specific challenges of students from Turkey, she stated that pre-departure trainings should focus on developing coping strategies by referring to incidents experienced by former students so that preparations can affect the "deep culture" that is more hidden part of the iceberg. Yıldırım & İlin (2017) studied cultural adaptation of Turkish Erasmus students and explained that even if students developed strategies to cope with the new community by benefiting from the peer support system, resorting to native food and to hard and regular work, students' psychological well-being was threatened by the negative image of the home country. Zırh (2008) suggested the term "longing for the foreign lands" for the situation the Erasmus students from Turkey are in after their exchange terms. He further explained that this longing manifests itself in a wide spectrum, starting from encountering difficulties even in simplest routines (i.e. crossing the street) to feeling anger about the simple (horn noises) and more challenging issues (democratization) of the country, all of which point at the direction of popular term "quality of living" and eventually results in going abroad in every possible occasion. Explaining the readjustment experience upon return, Kağıtçıbaşı (1978) study revealed that after returning home informants underwent a readjustment process arriving at an optimum level in about a year.

The Role of Social Media in the Sojourn Experience

The role of social media is undeniable in the lives of study-abroad students in a number of ways. Youth acquire and nurture transnational connections and share a mutual youth culture even if they are continents apart, with the influence of social media and extensive travels. Transnational study opportunities provide an outstanding environment to nurture and further contribute to a transnational youth culture. Neyzi (2001) mentioned the rise of a global youth culture that resulted in the convergence of experiences of young people in global cities. In explaining the concept of border youth, Giroux (1996, pp. 67-68) advocates that “This is a world in which one is condemned to wander across, within, and between multiple borders and spaces marked by excess, otherness, difference, and a dislocating notion of meaning and attention. ... No longer belonging to any one place or location, youth increasingly inhabit shifting cultural and social spheres marked by a plurality of languages and cultures.” It goes without saying that social media tools and venues contribute significantly to this transnational culture in terms of identity reconstructions and presentations as well as their practical implications and effects on psycho-social well-being of students. Despite all the challenges, as the literature and research data explain, social media venues and tools are inevitable for global education and students benefit from them in multiple ways.

According to Downey & Gray (2012, p. 1), “the current generation of students departing for study abroad is electronically literate or “digital natives”, who have thoroughly integrated internet and communication technologies into their daily lives.” The ways in which social media and real life connections may affect each other establishes a critical dynamic to consider at the junction of home and host domains. Former studies underline the influence of social media on adaptation and wellbeing as well as identity formation. According to Forbush & Foucault-Welles (2016, p. 1) study conducted with Chinese international students studying in the US, “students who used SNSs more often during their study abroad preparations had larger, more diverse social networks abroad, compared with students who used Social Networking Sites (SNSs) less often or not at all. Students with more diverse social networks reported significantly higher levels of social and academic adaptation in the host culture”. A mixed methods research based on interviews with 161 Facebook users suggested the significant association of Facebook use with well-being and the dual outcomes of enjoyment (positive in SNS; negative in users’ lives) (Jung, Pawlowski & Kim, 2017). Lönnqvist & Deters (2016, p. 113) investigated whether the size of an individual's Facebook social network was associated with social well-being (SWB) and perceived social support and the results suggest that “objectively measured Facebook network

size was positively associated with several measures of both self- and informant rated SWB but not with perceived social support.” Cemalcilar et al. (2005) mention that internet-related technologies are used frequently by international students to communicate with the home domains, which in turn has a positive effect on the maintenance of home identity and perceptions of available social support, thus adaptation to the new culture. Along similar lines, Sandel (2014) describes the effects of the Internet and cell phones on shortening the perception of distance and making it easier for students to stay in contact with family and friends from afar since building, bridging and bonding and associated platforms result in intertwined physical and virtual worlds. Latisha, Surina & Nazira (2012) explain that chosen usernames, language and profile pictures reconstruct online identities (visual and textual) as a result of peer perception, social connection, popularity and the self domains. Noor, Hana & Hendricks (2011) emphasize the popularity and refer to various uses of Facebook as displaying identity, communication, being a part of daily lives/routines, source of social drama.

2.5 Socio-Political and Cultural Outlook in Turkey

The background information on the socio-cultural and political realities presented in this section is essential to understand the context that influences students from Turkey. Besides the influence of (inter)personal, linguistic, academic factors mentioned in the previous section as well as home-host domain characteristics, there are also cultural factors that might adversely affect the sojourn experience of exchange students from Turkey. Some of these negative factors might be certain cultural traits such as tight cultural norms, conservatism, and interethnic discrimination /intolerance.

Gelfand et al. (2011) define tight cultures as having many strong norms and a low tolerance of deviant behavior and Turkey is one of the highest countries with a score of 9.2, where the average score is 6.5 and maximum is 12.3. It may be more difficult for students coming from such a cultural context to adapt to new settings, especially when the host destinations are considered to be loose. Hall’s high context cultures are defined as covert/implicit, giving emphasis on non-verbal expressions, reserved reactions, distinct in-groups and outgroups, strong interpersonal bonds, high commitment, and open/flexible time frames (Lustig & Koester, 2010). According to these characteristics, Turkey may be considered high context. In Hofstede’s cultural taxonomy, the original five dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, long term vs short orientation to time (Lustig & Koester, 2010). When these dimensions are applied to the Turkish case, the findings reveal that power distance,

uncertainty avoidance and collectivism are high, and Turkey is more on the feminine side of the scale and time orientation cannot be determined because of intermediate values.¹⁹ High power distance refers to the characteristics of strong central power, selective information flow and hierarchies where high uncertainty avoidance means being threatened by ambiguous situations and feeling the need to create laws, rules, and traditions and high collectivism translates into being in groups and establishing loyalty. When considering the aforementioned traits vis-à-vis the positionality of students from Turkey studying abroad, adaptation might be a challenge considering the fact that Turkey is on the higher end with respect to power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism as well as coming from a culture with strong norms and high reliance on the context rather than the explicit message. For students who are raised up in a hierarchal, collectivist culture that tries to shape every aspect of personal, social and professional life, the study abroad experience might be a real challenge with all sets of new rules, traditions, social structures, communication, and group relations.

Unlike more conventional approaches to the study of identities, classification of Turkey in line with one particular culture and value system might be considered problematic due to the cultural shifts observed in the last few decades. The recent socio-political, cultural, and educational outlook in Turkey depicts a paradoxical picture where the divide between the traditional and modern gets deeper, conservatism has become an ordinary widely experienced phenomenon and the public experiences the existence as well as demands of numerous cultural identities at the same time. There are studies that suggest the need to accept and tolerate different cultural identities and manifestations and the dominance of conservatism that continue to affect lives at different levels. Kalaycıoğlu & Çarkoğlu (2009) advocate that Turkish political outlook as of the 1990s started to change; the earlier rhetoric about class differences and wars was replaced with terms such as “believers”, “faithful”, “oppressed”, “identity”, “laicism”, sectarian and ethnic origins became obscure and religious brotherhood and communities became more noticeable. According to the results of the internationally and nationally conducted studies, intolerance, discrimination, and (religious) conservatism have been concerning facts of the country (Esmer, 2012; Yılmaz, 2008).

The reflections of the afore-mentioned values on education and educational processes are also alarming. There are studies on text books that reveal the narrow and singular definition of nationalism and citizenship, backed by ethnocentrism and essentialism (Çayır,

¹⁹ Retrieved from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/turkey/>

2009, 2014) as well as studies that refer to the concerns of achieving inclusionary and multicultural educational environments (Arslan, 2009; ERI, 2016). A recent study conducted by the British Council indicates that even if youth is more open to diversity compared to previous generations, today's youth still needs to improve regarding acceptance of Turkey's ethnic and cultural diversity²⁰. The afore-mentioned study especially discusses youth's distance towards some groups, including Syrian immigrants, non-Muslims, LGBT individuals (British Council, Next Generation Türkiye Report, 2017). While studies underline ethnic and cultural distance towards some groups, Çayır & Ayan-Ceyhan (2012) suggest Turkey has been experiencing serious transformations where groups with different languages, religions, sects and/or sexual orientation than the dominant ones increasingly mention discrimination and demand equal treatment which in turn affects public debates as well as the possibility for tension.

Higher Education Outlook in Turkey

It is also valuable to have a look at the Turkish higher education setting and important historical developments in which the international programs are being implemented. The history of some educational institutions actually date back to the Ottoman times; however, with the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, subsequent reforms affected the higher education outlook considerably by establishing new institutions, closing down some and converting others with the guidance of Western modernization and secularization (Gürüz, 2015; Mızıkacı, 2006). According to the information presented by the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK), with the so-called '1981 higher education reform'²¹, all higher education institutions were converted to universities or faculties and have been restructured under the umbrella of the Higher Education Council of Turkey. One very important development of the post 1980's has been the establishment of foundation (private) universities by businessmen and/or opinion leaders through non-profit foundations. There were offers a brief explanation about the establishment of private universities since there were no universities in Turkey until 1984 with that status (EUA Report, 2008). YÖK numbers

²⁰ Turkish Republic, successor of the Ottoman Empire, is composed of a multicultural society. According to the research conducted in 2006, the composition is approximately the following: 81% Turkish, 9% Kurdish and Zaza and the rest local identities as well as those with Balkan and Caucasian roots. Following the footprints of 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey recognizes non-Muslim minorities such as Armenians, Greeks and Jews as ethnic minorities and this legal status is not granted to Muslim minorities.

²¹ The Higher Education Council has historically been an organization that is at the heart of many debates since it was initiated right after the military coup of 1980 to centrally control all universities and the respective higher education law was prepared in an ambiguous period.

published in June 2018 state that there are 206 higher education institutions in Turkey, 129 of which are public and 72 foundation (private), 5 foundation vocational school of higher education.²²

The Turkish higher education system involves many debates on quality of teaching and research, discrepancies, access, governance and autonomy, quality assurance just to name a few (EUA Report, 2008; Mızıkacı, 2006) and the differences between public and foundation universities have always been a heated debate at the nexus of these issues. The introduction of foundation/private universities created mixed sentiments in different circles and especially during the first years, they were seen as less prestigious institutions, providing education to students who are academically less successful and financially well off. Considering diversity of the quality of education offered and student achievements, it is surely difficult to make such generalizations. Some of these foundation institutions have proved to be important examples in terms of research, teaching and community service and set the standards high by also taking part in internationally recognized rankings. As Gürüz (2015, p. 12) explains “The positive impact of private universities has been the creation of a competitive and entrepreneurial environment in an area still considered by many in Turkey to be the public domain.” From another angle, it is not just the university entrance exam scores or grade point average that determine student success and achievements but also how much students benefit from academic, social, and cultural resources of an educational setting towards completing an academic program and setting personal targets and achieving them.

One of the important debates within the higher education settings, also very much in tact with global education opportunities, has always been language learning and teaching. Aslan (2018) summarizes the controversial outlook in Turkey regarding English medium instruction, he underlines the unresolved nature of instruction issues and suggests that one side considers it as problematic mainly due to its potential impact on Turkish culture and identity and others see it as part of the solution to sociocultural and educational issues in a globalized world. Foreign/second language and foreign language medium education in Turkey have spurred especially in the aftermath of the 1980s at different education levels and institutions, including tertiary education. Consequently, most of the public universities predominantly teach in Turkish but offer foreign language courses or some percent of their instruction in a foreign language whereas private/foundation universities predominantly teach in a foreign language, in line with the subject area needs and higher education regulations. In

²² Retrieved from <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/universitelerimiz>

Turkey, English is observed a high prestige international language and adopted as a medium of instruction. Consequently, most of the institutions offering foreign medium instruction operate in/with English; however, there are considerable university students who start with a language preparation year before starting their freshman years and some of them extend this preparation year even further. On another note, even if students are engaged with rich English for academic purposes environments, due to timing and prior experiences, the progress may be limited, in turn affecting their performance in the study abroad selections.

2.6 Research Questions

A number of internationally conducted research discussed above, mutually highlights the importance of international connectedness and social interaction, language, personal skills, learning, existence/management of cultural stressors, and acculturation experiences that are closely linked to intercultural experiences. Comparing the scope and size of literature on global education, particularly study abroad/exchange students in different parts of the world, it is possible to conclude that research on this field is just emerging in Turkey, especially with the influence of the Erasmus program that has mainstreamed the study abroad experience through the years. According to former research in Turkey, the experience may be referred to as “the experience of a lifetime” and “a must”, stressing how important the change has been in self-management, cultural awareness, and construction of transnational structures (Arslan, 2013; Tekin, 2013). Previous studies from Turkey mostly focus on general program outcomes and motivational factors; however, they lack an in-depth analysis of the process, taking into consideration students’ background, home/host domains as well as a multidimensional approach to the evaluation of intercultural competence. Secondly, most of the previous studies in Turkey are conducted within a single institution/faculty and mostly by either qualitative or quantitative techniques. Thirdly, previous studies offer limited reflection and analyses vis-à-vis different theories and models of intercultural competence. Last but not the least, former studies in Turkey do not provide reflections on identity changes or reconstructions during the sojourn experience.

Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013, p. 550) suggest that “Existing adjustment research tended to focus primarily on the motivational goals of adjustment or the type of friendship network patterns (e.g., host national network, co-national network, or multi-national network) but did not probe deeper into the narratives of international students’ identity change, adjustment processes or the quality of their friendship networks.” Taking into consideration previously held studies and gaps in research; this research aims to provide an explanation to the sojourners’ identity change process, contextual-relational factors of the sojourn as well as

quality of social networks while offering a comprehensive explanation on intercultural competence.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This research takes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, to explore and explain student experiences and study abroad program outcomes across different institutions and countries towards investigating a number of themes including respondents' exploration and commitment towards their own identities; understanding their stance on multiculturalism and its repercussions on the daily societal life; understanding attachment towards home and host domains and the acculturative role of these communities; exploring students' knowledge, skills and attitudes crucial for being interculturally competent. While defining and discussing the issue from different perspectives, this dissertation also engages with various models of intercultural competence. The following questions will be addressed throughout the manuscript:

- How does participating in the Erasmus exchange program influence the intercultural competence of participating students?
- How do identity issues play out in participants' everyday lives and/or how do they (re)construct their identities based on their intercultural experiences?
- How do antecedent factors at system, individual and interpersonal levels influence the sojourn experience?

3.1 Participants

The main target population is outbound Erasmus students attending higher education institutions in Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. These three provinces host the highest number of institutions/international students with varying characteristics, which make them important places to carry out research. 48 pre-test respondents, 22 post-test respondents were recruited between November 2016 and September 2017. During this period, seven respondents were either interviewed or presented with a set of open-ended questions based on their availability and preference. The pre-test respondents attend 12 Turkish higher education institutions (6 public and 6 foundation/private), predominantly in Istanbul (n=30) and Ankara (n=14) (3 İçel and 1 Eskişehir). They were born in 17 different cities while three informants reported a foreign country. 39 respondents were attending foundation/private universities and 9 were attending public universities. They were mostly 3rd and 4th year students (n=40) and only few were masters (n=5) and 2nd year (n=3) students, predominantly studying Engineering, Social Sciences and Business. The average age was 22.3 years and 81% were females.

All pre-test respondents stated to have received instruction in English during study abroad; only one mentioned German as the one and only instruction language and 14 students mentioned instruction language at the host both in English as well as the national language. Respondents' countries of destinations were the Netherlands (n=16), Germany (n=14), France (n=8), Poland (n=6), Sweden and Czech Republic (n=4) (Appendix 1) and they studied in 32 cities, mostly during the Spring semester of 2017 (n=26).

In the beginning of the process 37 institutions (20 public and 17 private/foundation) were contacted. There is a balance in the number of public and private institutions; however, the number of respondents from private/foundation universities is higher. The orientation of respondents' institutions is also diverse: engineering and science oriented, fine arts/design, social sciences, teaching in foreign languages (English and French but also offering courses in other languages such as German). The number of respondents from private/foundation universities is higher than public universities, which might suggest that respondents are economically privileged. On the other hand, private universities provide considerable scholarship opportunities to successful but less fortunate students, which in turn diversify the student body. Taking into consideration the selection criteria for Erasmus (50% academic performance and 50% language score), we can propose that students who are successful and on various scholarship schemes actually have the priority to participate in the exchange program.

3.2 Procedure

Students were mainly recruited through contacting the private (foundation) and public universities' International Offices that send the highest number of exchange students from Turkey. Respondents were also recruited via contacting foreign universities (via personal contacts as well as International Offices of highest number of student-receiving institutions according to the European Commission statistics) and Erasmus Student Network sections in the destination countries. In line with the most recent Erasmus country statistics available in the beginning of the research, 25 institutions that send the highest number of students in Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir were approached to distribute the survey to their respective student body. Institutions in Anatolian cities that host only few students but send more students were also approached but no response was received. Institutions of the aforementioned provinces that send-receive students in smaller scales were also contacted. In sum, the invitation to take part and the questionnaire were sent to 40 institutions. Nine institutions responded affirmative and three institutions stated that they must receive their Ethical Board approvals. One of these procedures would last several months so no application was filed for

permission. In the other two institutions the evaluation was rather quick and less bureaucratic. Accordingly, the less bureaucratic way was pursued for the sake of the research. Only one institution openly disagreed to forward the survey link to the respective student body and 28 institutions never responded. The consent of the Ethics Board of the Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences was obtained before the data collection. The research design was shared along with an information letter (email), debriefing note and a letter of consent to be accepted by the participants. Those who accepted were directed to a site with the survey, using Qualtrics. This information was also made public via the researcher's social media accounts due to the existence of appropriate contacts that could convey the information to the respective student body. The pre-departure survey invitation and link were sent to students via email with the assistance of respective International Offices and/or faculty members. Students' correspondence details were requested in the pre-test to be able to send the post departure survey and the post-test link was directly sent to the respondents by the researcher. Several reminders were sent out to promote participation. Participation was voluntary and no financial remuneration was provided. The questionnaire was originally developed in English.

3.3 Instruments

A convergent mixed methods research design was used; both quantitative and qualitative instruments (survey design, open-ended interview questions, semi-structured questions, social media) have been utilized for collecting and analyzing data towards providing answers to the research questions. All quantitative data was entered into the SPSS statistical package program.

As part of the quantitative study, two surveys were administered before and after the mobility period. The pre-departure questionnaire, consisting of 42 questions, included demographic questions, scales targeting to evaluate students' intercultural competence and understanding, and scales to evaluate students' stance towards multiculturalism and their cultural identities. The first section of the pre-departure survey included demographic questions that target students' educational and socio-cultural background as well as their views of their cultural backgrounds, identities and views on multiculturalism to be more precise. Most of the questions about backgrounds were multiple choice or open-ended. Questions about students' identity, multiculturalism, and the Turkish context allowed students to give scores rather than making selections. The second part of the questionnaire, aimed to understand students' competence in terms of intercultural encounters by questioning their communication skills, approach towards learning, social interaction/networks, self-management/knowledge, cultural intelligence as well as home and host domains. The

following instruments, developed and used in former studies, were integrated for assessing the afore-mentioned topics: Ethnic Identification Scale (Yağmur & Van de Vijver, 2012), Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R) (Phinney & Ong, 2007), Multicultural Ideology Scale (Berry & Kalin, 1995), Acculturative role of home-host domains (Galchenko & Van de Vijver, 2006), Test to Measure Intercultural Competence-TMIC (Schnabel, 2015) and Cultural Intelligence (Thomas et al. 2015 & Ang et al. 2007).

Participants were asked to select their ethnic identification from a list of 8 different items in order of importance, with the first being the primary affiliation. They were able to make multiple selections as well as writing an additional one in case the given selections did not apply to them. For those who selected Turkish, identification with Turkishness was assessed with Ethnic Identification Scale comprising 9 statements that investigate their attachment to Turkishness vis-à-vis linguistic, religious, cultural, and historical ties with statements such as “I speak Turkish”, “I am a Muslim”, I live in accordance with “Turkish norms and values”, “I was raised as a Turkish person”. Responses were given on a 4-point scale with options ranging from very unimportant (1) to unimportant (2), important (3), very important (4). Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R) included 6 statements and was used to understand respondents’ exploration and commitment towards their own ethnic ties with statements such as “I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.”, “I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.”, “I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.”, “I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.” Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The Multicultural Ideology Scale was included to assess respondents’ stance on multiculturalism and its repercussions on the daily societal life with 10 statements: “I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.”, “Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.”, “People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.”, “Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.” Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Parts of a questionnaire by Galchenko & Van de Vijver (2006) were included to understand attachment towards home and host domains and cultures (acculturative role of the home/host communities, their support and vitality). The scale consisted of 21 items, such as “I am proud of being a citizen of my

country”, “Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy”, “I have many friends from my own country”, “My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with”. Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1- strongly disagree to 7- strongly agree. 15 of the key factors of the Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC) was used with 15 items to assess important dimensions that are also prerequisites for intercultural competence such as communication, learning, social interaction, creating synergies, and self-knowledge: “The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to”, “I know how other people feel without them having to tell me”, “I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language”, “When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information”, “I find it easy to position myself within a group”, “I have a large network of professional contacts”, “I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests”, “I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture”. Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Cultural Intelligence scale involved 12 statements about one’s experience when interacting with people from other cultures. The scale includes statements to assess knowledge, skills, and metacognition crucial in intercultural competence such as knowledge about different cultures, interaction with people coming from different cultures, adaptability and awareness about various cultural situations and change such as: “I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different”, “I enjoy talking with people from different cultures”, “I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people”, “I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people”. Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The post departure survey, consisting of 32 closed ended questions, in addition to the afore-mentioned scales (Ethnic Identification, Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised, Multicultural Ideology, Acculturative role of the home/host communities, TMIC, Cultural Intelligence) gave students the chance to reflect on to the quality of the host country/destination in academic, social and cultural terms. 18 questions (“Was the host institution significantly different from your home institution?”, “Were the facilities offered by the host institution satisfactory?”, “Was there a strong presence of your home country where you studied?”, “Did you have separate classes with all Erasmus/international exchange students?”, “Did you receive welcome/orientation sessions at the host institution?”) with response options Yes/No/Not Applicable/Undecided. The acculturative role of the host

destination was also questioned with another part of the Galchenko & Van de Vijver (2006) survey with 14 items (“Host country students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture”, “Host country students know nothing about my home country and culture”, “Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about host country society”, “Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about other countries”, “My study brought me closer to host country people”, “My study brought me closer to other international students”). Responses were given on a 7-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1- strongly disagree to 7- strongly agree. The last part of the post departure survey included 19 open-ended questions on the following topics: any critical (positive and/or negative) experiences, preferences on living/working/studying in a foreign destination in the future, the frequency of having intercultural contacts during exchange, feeling of connectedness towards locals and internationals, membership of virtual networks and any benefits, transfer of skills gained during the experience, methods of keeping in touch with family/friends/locals, receiving support during the sojourn, level of integration, critical gains from the program, evaluation of host city and institution, evaluation of the experience regarding fostering learning and motivation.

As part of the qualitative approach, the first step of qualitative data collection was executed via the post-test surveys with 19 semi-structured questions. As a second step, based on the answers and focus of the study, 5 more questions were posed in face-to-face interviews or in a written way, in line with the respondents’ preferences and availability. Ethnographic observation, interviews, open-ended questions (via email and the post-departure survey), and social media sources presented by the respondents constitute the backbone of the study. Social media, in particular Facebook posts of five respondents as well as numerous Facebook groups shared by all informants were reviewed since new media tools are indispensable parts of students’ lives, transforming every aspect of socio-cultural and educational setting all over the world. Most of the groups and media stated by students were closed ones so it was not possible to extract detailed individual information; however, it was still possible to receive information regarding the most common themes, aims, and usage. Students’ explanations of their social media usage supported the analysis of this process. Each of the pre-departure and post-departure surveys included 2 questions about students’ social media usage and patterns and the interviews also had one question about this topic. Pre-test questions were to discover their memberships in Facebook in relation to being an exchange student and whether they (will) keep a blog about exchange. The post departure survey collected information about the Facebook groups that students took part in contributed to, ways in which they benefitted from

social media and what kind of entries they post/followed. As the final step of the research, all post departure respondents were approached and 8 of those who responded positively were either interviewed face-to-face or were presented with open-ended questions when an interview was not possible/preferred, about the following issues: social media usage and its importance during their exchange term, thoughts on their intercultural competence skills, what kind of change their close by circle (family, friends, etc.) observed in them after the exchange, any comments/questions they received about being from Turkey during their exchange terms, and whether they think each and every young person can/should attend to the program.

Additionally, the researcher has many years of prior experience in the global education field, which has given the opportunity for participant observation, and work with students, administrators, faculty members as well as NGOs and public officers across a vast geography which assisted in reaching out to the sample population and providing explanations. Having professional and academic experience in the global education field might be considered a downside in terms of approaching the field and implementations objectively; however, this study also takes into account numerous critiques of the global education movements/actors, towards providing a balanced approach by mapping out opportunities and challenges that emerge from within.

3.4 Data Analyses

After conducting the surveys, interviews, answers to semi-structured questions and social media observations were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The texts of qualitative data were recorded in a word processor document. The qualitative data from the surveys were organized in an excel sheet. Blair (2015) states that codes are creating labels in order to develop data into meaningful categories to be analyzed and interpreted. For this reason, all answers were read through several times, were coded, and recurrent themes were identified. Willig (2013, 70) suggests that “Grounded theory as method provides us with guidelines on how to identify categories, how to make links between categories and how to establish relationships between them.” In line with this approach, utterances from interviews/emails were coded at three levels: initial code, re-code, and selective code. Utterances were informants’ answers to semi-structured questions and mostly included short paragraphs. Initial code was a brief explanation of the utterance whereas re-code and selective code were higher level categories that represent lower level units. For instance, in one case, initial code was “Describing previous international experience and intercultural encounters that motivate towards this experience and a new level of intercultural awareness”, recode was

“New discoveries during social encounters”, and selective code was “Increased intercultural awareness and knowledge”. In another example, the initial code was “Describing the political stance of Turkish-Dutch who were born and raised up in the Netherlands: praise for the political atmosphere in Turkey”, which was re-coded as “Socio-cultural differences of Turkish-Dutch and exchange students from Turkey”, selective code was “Perception and evaluation of local Turkish immigrant identity”. Some of the qualitative data from the surveys were again analyzed using the afore-mentioned codes. Additionally, some were organized and coded in several levels, where applicable. During the first open coding step, individual responses were coded for key words. In the second step, repetitions were detected and codes were merged where overlap was identified. The key results were then examined in relation to the research questions and emerging themes such as program acquisitions at different levels, cultural dimension (knowledge about self and others, learning, difficulties); social dimension (intercultural encounters, quality and nature of networks, communication); identity issues. Important quotations and unique excerpts were also marked during these processes. Contextual factors such as key events/issues, settings, people, and processes were all illuminating in analyzing the data. For instance, in considering host domain actors’ attitudes towards the home domain, contemporary political discussions and/or long-lasting concerns between different countries and cultural groups were considered. In a similar fashion, it was important to consider the influence of numerous social networks that informants took part in.

In the quantitative analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. For the descriptive analyses, mean score and standard deviation values were computed both for pre and post-tests scale by scale. Factor analysis and reliability analysis were carried out for the pre-test and post-test responses scale by scale. The difference between repeated pre and post-tests was also investigated with paired *t*-tests. Additionally, the differences between students who took part in both tests and students who took part in pre-test only were also investigated with MANOVA. The comparison of pre-test respondents was investigated with ANOVA. The results of these tests are presented in the Results chapters.

Chapter 4: Pre-Departure Results

In this chapter, mainly the results of the pre-departure survey are discussed. The pre-departure assessment aimed to define and explain respondents' backgrounds, prior experiences and education, reported self-identification, orientations and worldviews as well as evaluation on multiculturalism, cultural intelligence, intercultural competence, and acculturative role of home and host domains. While doing so, some earlier work on the structure of society in Turkey will also be reviewed to juxtapose the background of the respondents vis-à-vis general tendencies in the country. After presenting the outcomes of different measurement scales, the findings will be discussed.

4.1 Participants' Prior Experience & Background

Socio-Cultural Background

The survey instrument was administered to 48 respondents (N=48) prior to their departure. As has been expected, most students live with their families and second and third ranked selections are dormitories and private rentals. 29 of the respondents do not have parents and siblings who studied abroad; however, 36 mothers' education level is university degree and high school degree whereas 35 fathers' education level is university and graduate degree. This is an important indicator of socio-economic status since according to a research conducted in 2006, amongst males who are 44+, the ratio of high school and higher education graduates was stated to be approximately 17% and amongst females who are 44+, the ratio of high school and higher education graduates are stated to be approximately 10% (KONDA, 2006)

41 of the students are members of exchange Facebook groups and 7 students keep a blog. They are all very active on social media which helps them considerably during their exchange semesters for various purposes as will be explained in the coming sections. The social media usage outlook is in line with the research conducted by Habitat Turkey in 2016 on the wellbeing of youth. According to this study, 94% of youth use social media at least once a week; amongst those who benefit from the internet, 86% use Facebook, 85% WhatsApp and 71% Instagram.

Previous International Travels

40 students travelled to foreign countries before and the most frequently selected response was tourism for earlier travels (n=39) (Table 4.1). Amongst the previous international travel responses, language school and study make up for a considerable portion as well (n=25). Considerable part of the respondents stated to have prior international

experience which means studying abroad was not the first international encounter for this batch which would expectedly affect the intercultural competence of participants. Recognizing the fact that not each and every international activity is intercultural and the fact that touristic trips usually take place for a very short period and may involve limited encounters with the local environment, it would still not be misleading to expect students would at least have a notion of being in a foreign place with different consumption patterns and daily routine. Also, a substantial number of students experienced language school and study abroad which suggests a number of students experienced living abroad for a longer period.

Table 4.1: Reasons of Previous International Travel		Frequency
1	Work and travel	5
2	Study	12
3	Language school	13
4	Summer school	7
5	Other exchange program	8
6	Internship	4
7	Tourism	39

Pre-Departure Orientation and Reasons for Study Abroad

10 respondents stated to have received orientation/training before their departure. Considering the widespread and in a way obligatory nature of these types of sessions, the number seems quite low. The content of these trainings were stated to be the following: culture shock and academic differences, host country, orientation, accommodation, courses-residence permit-insurance, Survival Guide from the host institution, information and advice, living condition, basic application procedures. These programs may not have been offered or students might have chosen not to attend due to personal reasons (schedule conflict, having prior experience, following up on social media for important information, attending after taking the survey etc.); however, it is still crucial to report.

When asked about their reasons of study abroad, 42 students stated academic, 39 stated social and 36 stated cultural reasons. After these three most popular answers, linguistic, personal and career related reasons are observed, respectively (Table 4.2). When compared with the results of the 2016 Erasmus Impact Study, we see some similarities and differences. According to this study, from the perspective of participants, the top 5 most common reasons for participation in the student mobility programs are the following: opportunity to live abroad 96%, opportunity to meet new people 94%, opportunity to learn/ improve a foreign language 94%, opportunity to develop soft skills (i.e. adaptability, taking initiative, proactivity) 92%, improve and widen career prospects in the future 90%. The respondents

also refer to social, cultural, personal reasons; however, their number one motive before departure is academic. Also, for this group of students, career related reasons are not stated to be primary. It will be important to see whether this orientation changes after the actual experience. It is also striking to see language is not a priority even if linguistic stressors and inadequacies are stated to be crucial in the case of students from Turkey (Report on Turkish Students, Isolation and the Erasmus Challenge, 2014; Brown and Aktaş, 2011) and that there are previous studies that state, from the eyes of participants, language improvement as an important outcome and aim of the program. (Aba, 2013; Arslan, 2013; Ünal & Özdemir, 2011)

Table 4.2: Reasons of Study Abroad	Frequency
Academic	42
Career related	28
Linguistic	31
Personal	29
Social	39
Cultural	36
Other	5

Respondents' Identities

As part of the pre-test, respondents were asked to identify their nationality, first-mother-tongue, and residency status. They were also asked about their ethnic identification, why they feel Turkish (if they have stated so), and the most important individual identity for them. Almost all respondents have Turkish citizenship (except one) but ten of them also have residence in other countries and three were actually born in other countries. All respondents, except one, state Turkish as their mother tongue. According to the research conducted by a prominent research company (KONDA, 2006), the ratio of Turkish as a mother tongue is 85%, so we may suggest that linguistic diversity of the country in terms of mother tongue is not reflected in the sample of this study. On the other hand, all respondents stated that they speak English, 31 students mentioned a second or third language (French, German, Italian, Hebrew, Spanish) and one student mentioned sign language. Respondents are predominantly from Anatolian high schools (n=32) and private schools (n=10) (there are 6 from private foreign, public or science high schools). It is a great challenge to discuss the nature of different schools as well as quality of education offered by these schools across the country since issues of quality, equality and access are serious concerns all over, especially in disadvantaged regions and disadvantaged neighborhoods of big cities. Nevertheless, private schools and some Anatolian high schools as well as science schools are generally believed to offer “better” education especially in terms of university entrance performance. One critical issue is surely the inherent paradox between the quality and nature of education to equip

students with skills and knowledge in accordance with their needs and the needs to live in the 21st century vs. performance in multiple choice tests.

50% of the respondents believe to have a secular orientation followed by atheist (18.8%), religious and conservative (18.7%). 6 respondents mentioned “other” orientation such as: “*I do not believe in labels.*”, “*I have respect for all religions.*”, “*I believe in God but have my own definition of religion.*”, “*I do believe in being a good person in every case.*”, “*Agnostic*” (Table 4.3). According to the study conducted by one of the leading research companies in Turkey, if the Turkish society was 100 people, the self-reported life style of the population would be the following: 26 modern, 46 traditional-conservative, 28 religious-conservative (KONDA). Rankin et al (2014) also refer to three clusters in their mapping of cultural consumption patterns in Turkey: engaged cosmopolitans who are urban and globalized, engaged provincialists who are traditional and support an active role for religion in public life, a culturally disengaged group with the least income. In light of this information, our sample seems to mainly reflect one dimension of the society which is more modern and open. According to a study conducted with 400 students from five different universities in three largest cities, a second order factor analysis revealed that Nationalist-Islamic identity and authoritarian, ethnocentric and antisecular values formed a cluster whereas Kemalist and Western identities were grouped with low levels of patriotism (Hortac & Cem-Ersoy, 2005). We could also refer to this divide with the characteristics of the respondents of this study that refer to more of Kemalist and/or Western identities with low levels of patriotism rather than a Nationalist-Islamic identification.

Table 4.3: Self-reported orientation		Percentage	Frequency
1	Religious	16.7	8
2	Conservative	2.0	1
3	Secular oriented	50	24
4	Atheist	18.8	9
5	Other	12.5	6

Respondents who identified themselves as Turkish, were asked to rate their feeling of Turkishness vis-à-vis the statements, in a scale of very unimportant-1, unimportant-2, important-3, very important-4. As presented in Table 4.4, “*being born to Turkish parents*”, “*being raised up as Turkish*” and “*speaking Turkish*” were selected to be slightly more important. Considering the composition (background, prior experience etc.) of the group, the weak relationship between religion and national/ethnic identity is not surprising. “*Being Muslim*” and “*knowing about religion*” score the lowest with values 1.13 and 1.15, respectively. The third lowest item is “*I look Turkish*” with 1.52 which is also a common

comment that exchange students from Turkey usually face during their exchange terms. It is also important to state that the mean scores for each statement are low which suggest that respondents' attachment towards Turkishness is not strong. This suggestion is reinforced by the outcome included in Table 5 with very low national identification score.

Table 4.4: Feeling of Turkishness	M	SD
I speak Turkish.	2.65	1.31
I am a Muslim	1.13	0.89
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	2.04	1.35
I know a lot about my religion.	1.15	0.98
I was born from Turkish parents.	2.94	1.19
I was raised as a Turkish person.	2.79	1.30
I look Turkish.	1.52	1.03
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	2.15	1.28
Turkish history means a lot to me.	2.17	1.34

When asked about their most important identities, respondents' human (n=25) and personal (n=21) identities were stated to be the most important whereas national and religious identities were stated to be important for only two respondents. There was no respondent that mentioned ethnic identity. (Table 4.5)

Table 4.5: The most important identities for respondents	Frequency
1 National	1
2 Religious	1
3 Personal	21
4 Ethnic	0
5 Linguistic	0
6 Human	25

When asked to identify themselves (Table 4.6), 39 respondents picked Turkish, 3 picked Caucasian, 1 picked Roma and 3 picked non-Muslim minority as their primary identities. When we observe the selection of secondary identities, there is more diversity: 14 Balkan, 7 Arabic, 7 Caucasian, 7 Kurdish, 5 Roma, 3 Zaza and 3 Turkish. "Other" identities were stated to be European, Alevi, and Pontian. There were also notes as the following: *"it cannot be known for sure"*, *"I am just human"*, *"Even though I do feel like Turkish and Balkan because of my family bounds, there is a fact that after Ottoman Empire, there is a chance that we might have all these ethnicities in our families without knowing and this will not make me uncomfortable."* The respondents define themselves as predominantly Turkish but also mention other secondary ethnic affiliations that constitute a quite diverse outlook. More importantly, they are aware of this diversity and the multicultural nature of the society.

Table 4.6: Self-reported Ethnic Identification

		1- primary	2- secondary	3- tertiary	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1	Turkish	39	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	43
2	Arabic	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
3	Balkan	0	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
4	Caucasian	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	11
5	Kurdish	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
6	Zaza	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
7	Roma	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
8	Non-muslim minority	3	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	9
9	Other	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8

Identities are who they are, how they are perceived and also how they perceive the world. For this reason, it was important to ask about the country's critical issues and how the respondents situate these issues before and after the study abroad experience. When asked about the importance of some critical issues concerning their home country, according to the mean scores: 1- Terrorism and Syrian refugees/migrants are the most pressing issues and only after these come, ethnic discrimination, discrimination of minorities, and women rights, 2- Issues with the two lowest scores are freedom of religious practice and environmental pollution. 3- All mean scores are above 3.5, which suggest the high relevance of all these issues and the respondents 'engagement with agenda items and socio-cultural issues in the country. 4- "Other" issues were pronounced as the following: government, racism, kindness, prejudice, education system, unemployment and poverty (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Importance of Critical Issues in Turkey	1 (not imp)	2	3	4	5 (very imp)	M	SD
Environmental pollution	3	8	8	13	16	3.65	1.28
Human rights	6	5	6	2	29	3.90	1.51
Freedom of religious practice	4	7	15	4	18	3.52	1.35
Ethnic conflict	4	8	5	11	20	3.73	1.38
Discrimination of minorities	3	6	5	11	23	3.94	1.29
Terrorism	1	0	4	9	34	4.56	0.82
Ethnic discrimination	3	6	4	12	23	3.96	1.28
Women's rights	5	6	4	5	28	3.94	1.46
Children's rights	5	6	5	9	23	3.81	1.42
Syrian Refugees and migrants	1	5	10	9	23	4.00	1.14
Gender equality	8	3	7	3	27	3.79	1.57
Educational inequality	4	10	6	3	25	3.73	1.48
Other	12	2	5	0	9	2.71	1.76

Other: "education system, government, kindness, prejudice, unemployment and poverty".

4.2 Acculturative role of home and host domains

Respondents' relationship to their citizenship status and feelings towards their home country are not tension free (Table 4.8). 19 are on the negative spectrum (disagree) and 8 are undecided about the statement "*I am proud of being a citizen of my country*" with a mean value of 3.98. Similarly, 23 disagree and 10 are undecided about the statement "*I am happy to be a citizen of my country*", with a mean value of 3.79. The following values regarding national affiliation are more on the negative side compared to other positively loaded items: "Being part of the home country culture is not embarrassing" with a mean score 2.71 and "*Being part of the culture of home country makes the informants feel happy*" with a mean score 4.19. Even if there is discontent regarding the citizenship they hold, they are having friends from Turkey, meeting them regularly, and refer to it as giving pleasure and warmth (with scores above 5). This outlook may suggest that the discontent is due to the recent political and economic developments in the country which created a negative image in the international arena, especially in the geography that these students studied. The reason may also be the fact that the existing dichotomy between values of traditionalism and modernity in the Turkish society has become deeper with the recent social and political developments in the country.

Respondents' pre-departure thoughts on the host country environment were also positive: they feel happy about becoming part of the host country culture with a score of 4.9; they are not embarrassed or uncomfortable by being part of the host country culture (1.77 and 2.08 respectively). Establishing friendships in general (both from the same/opposite sex and home country) is reported not to be difficult.

Table 4.8: Acculturative role of home-host domains	M	SD
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	3.98	1.97
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	3.79	1.90
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.	2.71	1.57
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.	1.77	1.11
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.	2.08	1.49
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	4.19	1.83
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	4.98	1.76
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country	2.17	1.60
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.	1.96	1.44
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.	1.73	1.10
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	5.21	1.51
I have many friends from my own country.	5.42	1.78
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	4.35	1.95
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	5.48	1.63
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	5.27	1.71

When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	5.13	1.78
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	5.15	1.97
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	4.38	1.97
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	5.44	1.58
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	4.04	1.86
My best friends are from my country.	5.31	1.81

4.3 Intercultural Competence

Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC): Regarding communication, learning, social interaction, creating synergies, and self-knowledge, which refer to different facets of intercultural competence (Schnabel, 2015), respondents depict a positive outlook (Table 4.9). Nine items have scores above 5 and the rest are very close to 5. The highest items are “When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information” with 5.92 and “I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior” 5.56. The lowest score is on “I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts” with 3.90.

Table 4.9: Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC) Scale	M	SD
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	5.06	1.69
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	4.98	1.19
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	5.25	1.36
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	4.88	1.28
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	5.04	1.52
When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	5.92	1.02
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	5.42	1.33
When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	5.19	1.59
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	4.75	1.52
I have a large network of professional contacts.	4.48	1.68
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	3.90	1.70
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	4.60	1.39
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	5.29	1.22
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	5.10	1.44
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	5.56	1.12

Cultural Intelligence Scale: Respondents are on the positive spectrum of the items mentioned in Table 4.10, which refer to knowledge about different cultures, their difference and relativity as well as management and awareness of cultural relations, enjoying talking to people from different cultures, with scores above 5. We observe that they depict a very positive picture regarding knowledge on cultural differences, relating them to their own world and experience and enjoying the time spent with people coming from different cultures, with scores above 6. They can be described as culturally sensitive and aware, flexible, gender sensitive and relate to difference. The lowest item in this part is with score 5.06 and it is about accepting delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.

Table 4.10: Cultural Intelligence	M	SD
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	6.10	1.03
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	6.33	0.80
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	6.52	0.77
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	5.77	1.29
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	5.92	1.21
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	5.21	1.62
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	5.06	1.56
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	5.75	1.06
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	5.46	1.23
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	5.46	1.35
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	5.79	1.11
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	5.65	1.65

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure & Multicultural Ideology Scales: Respondents' ethnic identity in terms of commitment and exploration does not show strong ties; the responses range between 3.14 and 4.21 (Table 4.11). The lowest score is on one of the commitment items (feeling strong attachment towards one's ethnic group). The highest score is on one of the exploration items (talking to other people in order to learn more about ethnic group). The most dominant ethnic affiliation was stated to be Turkish but when asked about different aspects of feeling Turkish, the scores may be considered low. Also, respondents had stated other ethnic affiliations as secondary and tertiary ones. So, coupled with their thoughts on their identities, it is not surprising to observe a group that welcomes diversity and multiculturalism.

Table 4.11: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	M	SD	N
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	3.76	1.69	42
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	3.36	1.81	42
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	3.76	1.65	42
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	3.50	1.68	42
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	4.21	1.66	42
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	3.14	1.85	42

The scores of multicultural ideology scale are also high (Table 4.12). Items that refer to recognition of multiethnic society and learning about cultural subgroups are higher with scores 5.73 and 5.59, respectively. Negative items all received lower scores (2.66 - 3.93), which point to respondents' disagreement. The lowest items are regarding assimilation and avoidance of numerous identities.

Table 4.12: Multicultural Ideology Scale	M	SD	N
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	5.73	1.64	41
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	5.41	1.74	41
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.	2.66	1.85	41
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	4.59	2.097	41
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.	3.34	1.95	41
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.	3.61	1.84	41
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.	3.93	1.78	41
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	5.59	1.59	41
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	5.10	1.56	41
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.	2.37	1.56	41

4.4 A Comparative Look at Different Participant Groups

For the pre-test results, MANOVA was conducted to test differences between respondents who participated only in the pre-test survey and who participated in both pre/posttests; pre-test scale scores were the dependent variables. There was not a statistically significant difference between these two groups. Yet, given the small sample size, the power of this statistical test is limited.

ANOVA was conducted for pre-test scales taking into consideration the factors of having attended pre-departure orientation, gender, public-private university, and previous international travels/experience before the exchange. These independent variables were tested in separate ANOVAs. The results and explanations are provided below. A correction for multiple testing was not used, again due to the small sample size.

Ethnic Identification: The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I was raised as a Turkish person” ($p = 0.042$). The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “Turkish history means a lot to me” ($p = 0.037$). The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was marginally significant for “I am proud of my cultural heritage” ($p = 0.069$). For the afore-mentioned three items of the Ethnic Identification Scale, private university students had significantly higher means. (Appendix 2.1)

The effect of previous travel was significant for “I was born from Turkish parents.” ($p = 0.033$). The effect of previous travel was significant for “I look Turkish” ($p=0.009$). For the afore-mentioned two items of the Ethnic Identification Scale, means were higher for those who have not travelled before the exchange. (Appendix 2.22)

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: The effect of having received pre-departure orientation was significant for “I have spent time trying to find out about my ethnic group such as its history, traditions, and customs” ($p= 0.041$). The mean was higher for those with pre-departure orientation. (Appendix 2.18)

The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.” ($p = 0.047$). The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.” ($p = 0.038$). Private university students had higher means in the afore-mentioned items. (Appendix 2.6)

Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC): Students with pre-departure orientation had higher means in the following: 1- The effect of having received pre-departure orientation was significant for “I have a large network of professional contacts.” ($p = 0.002$); 2- The effect of having received pre-departure orientation was significant for “I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.” ($p = 0.020$). (Appendix 2.16)

Private university students had higher means in the following: 1- The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.” ($p = 0.011$). 2- The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.” ($p = 0.047$.) (Appendix 2.4)

Cultural Intelligence: The effect of gender was marginally significant for “I think a lot about the influence culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.” ($p = 0.066$). Female students had higher means. (Appendix 2.14)

The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.” ($p = 0.023$). The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.” ($p = 0.046$). The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.” ($p = 0.023$). Private university students had higher means in the afore-mentioned items. (Appendix 2.5)

Acculturative Role of Host-Home Domains: The effect of previous travel to foreign countries was significant for “I can easily ask favors from people of my country” ($p = 0.013$), “When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help” ($p = 0.015$), and “I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country” ($p = 0.029$). The means for students who did not internationally travel before the study abroad were higher. (Appendix 2.24)

The effect of gender was marginally significant for “I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.” ($p = 0.068$). Males have more difficulty in making friends from the opposite sex. (Appendix 2.13)

The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was significant for “I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex” $p = 0.027$. Private university students have more difficulty. The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was marginally significant for “My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.” ($p = 0.082$). Public university students had higher means. (Appendix 2.3)

Multicultural Ideology Scale: The effect of the nature of the institution (private versus public) was marginally significant for “The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.” $p = 0.065$. Public university students scored higher. (Appendix 2.7)

4.5 Conclusion

In sum, pre-test results indicated that respondents demonstrate more universal values and approaches towards the socio-cultural world around them rather than a worldview that praises strong nationalistic, religious, and ethnic ties. They are mostly on the high end of being open-minded, communicative, and respectful towards cultural differences and how these differences affect their lives. Having said that they do not prioritize nationalistic, religious or ethnic identities, their relations to the co-nationals seem to be warm, continuous and satisfactory. Respondents mostly come from well-known public, private/foundation universities and secondary schools that may be considered more advantageous besides having educated parents and prior international experiences. They define their orientation not in line with religious and/or conservative terms. For these afore-mentioned reasons, we can argue that this is an already culturally privileged group that uses the sojourn (Erasmus program) to extend their personal and social capital.

This section also evaluated some of the intergroup differences based on antecedent factors such as gender, home institution type (public or private), attending pre-departure orientation, and having experienced previous international travels since these factors are

important in affecting the positionality and preparedness of informants. Even though the sample size is small, some of the results talk with the student narratives. Higher ethnic identification and more attachment towards co-nationals would be expected for those without previous international experience. For the two items of the ethnic identification scale (looking Turkish and being born from Turkish parents) and three items of the acculturative role of home-host domains (easily asking favors from home country people, when in trouble asking help from home country nationals, participating actively in activities organized by home country people), the mean values for students without previous international travels were higher (Appendix 2.24). Taking into consideration institutional differences, for three items of the Ethnic Identification (being proud of cultural heritage, meaning of Turkish history, being raised as a Turkish person), private university students had significantly higher means. Again, private university students had significantly higher means in three items of the Cultural Intelligence Scale. Due to the level and nature of student services and education in private universities, it is not surprising to observe higher means in cultural intelligence; however, significance in terms of ethnic identification might be less expected. Regarding the acculturative role of home and host domains, private university students demonstrate more difficulty in making friends from the opposite sex and public university students have more pleasure to be with the co-nationals. Considering the structure of public universities, level of interaction with international students as well as social activities and orientation of faculty members, pleasure in spending time with the co-nationals is not surprising. Items about cultivating contacts had higher means for those with pre-departure orientation and two items about communication had higher means for private university students which in turn can be explained with the effects of pre-departure orientation and socio-cultural atmosphere of private universities.

Having discussed the pre-departure positionality of respondents, the next section will analyze and discuss the post experience outlook in detail as well as pre and post departure differences. Psychometric analyses will also be reported in the next chapter. Taking into account the more privileged background of the respondents in terms of prior international opportunities and socio-cultural characteristics, the next section will provide clues as to how and whether respondents with a more educated and inclusive outlook demonstrate change vis-à-vis international and intercultural encounters. In particular, outcomes of the sojourn experience will be discussed with a focus on intercultural competence as well as respective personal, academic, cultural and social acquisitions. The analyses will include reflection of

this group's identity change adjustment process, contextual-relational factors of the sojourn as well as quality of sojourners' social networks.

Chapter 5: Post-Experience Analyses

In this chapter, mainly the results of the post experience assessments (post-test quantitative and qualitative data, interviews, and social media analyses) will be discussed. The post-experience analyses include explanation of the antecedent, change process and outcome factors of the sojourn for respondents from Turkey based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative data to explain the background of the post-test respondents, features of the home-host destinations, the role of social media during the sojourn experience, support in difficult times, critical instances during the sojourn, connection to student networks, identity management, and the nature of having intercultural contacts during exchange. Finally, outcomes of the sojourn experience will be discussed with a focus on intercultural competence as well as respective personal, academic, cultural and social gains. As such, the analyses aims to reflect on identity change process, contextual-relational factors of the sojourn as well as quality of social networks.

5.1 Psychometric Analyses of the Scales

Reliability Analyses

Cronbach's alpha values were computed for each scale separately in pre and post-tests. Results are presented in the following Table. Most scales showed internal consistencies well above .70.

5.1 Psychometric Properties of the Scales	Pretest Internal Consistencies	Post-test Internal Consistencies
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R)	.830	.883
Ethnic Identification Scale	.928	.943
Multicultural Ideology Scale	.788	.702
Acculturative role of the home/host domains	.889	.803
Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)	.875	.777
Cultural Intelligence Scale	.872	.889
Acculturative role of the host-home domains	N/A	.864

Factor Analyses (Pre-test)

This section examines the factor analyses, addressing to what extent an instrument measures the same underlying construct(s) in each scale. Ethnic Identification Scale (Table 5.2) demonstrates one factor and all dimensions can be considered high in measuring Turkishness of the participants with loadings above 0.63. 55% of the variance was explained by the first factor.

5.2 Ethnic Identification Scale Component Matrix^a	Component 1
I speak Turkish.	.627
I am a Muslim	.663
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	.791
I know a lot about my religion.	.776
I was born from Turkish parents.	.732
I was raised as a Turkish person.	.679
I look Turkish.	.778
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	.801
Turkish history means a lot to me.	.801
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

Acculturative role of home-host domains demonstrates two factors in evaluating the acculturative role of the home and host dimensions: One is the feeling of belonging towards home/host domains and the other one is friendship networks and connections associated with home domains. 38 % of the variance can be explained by the first factor and 15% by the second factor. The highest loadings of the first factor are on items related to home domain networks and the highest loadings of the second factor are on attachment towards home country.

5.3 Acculturative role of home-host domains Rotated Component Matrix^a	Component	
	1	2
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	.250	.774
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	.184	.818
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R	.116	.655
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R	.002	.732
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R	-.059	.427
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	.211	.796
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	.175	.617
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.R	.693	.061
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.R	.633	.181
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.R	.246	-.307
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	.819	.189
I have many friends from my own country.	.811	.214
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	.814	.045

My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	.801	.289
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	.805	.146
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	.808	.006
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	.823	-.025
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	.796	.005
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	.666	.037
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble-and tension-free.	.358	.025
My best friends are from my country.	.682	.056

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
R= reverse scored items.

Factor analysis of TMIC yields one factor in which half of the loadings can be considered high, above 0.60. The higher scores represent items associated with social interaction and communication in groups. 34% of the variance was explained by the first factor.

5.4 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC) Component Matrix^a	Component 1
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	-.157
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	.409
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	.688
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	.411
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	.385
When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	.237
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	.366
When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	.607
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	.760
I have a large network of professional contacts.	.750
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	.816
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	.816
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	.678
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	.538
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	.602

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor analysis of the cultural intelligence scale yields one factor and almost all loadings are quite high, above 0.60, except for two. 50% of the variance was explained by the first factor. The highest items are related to cultural knowledge and awareness.

5.5 Intercultural Intelligence Component Matrix^a	Component 1
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	.689
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	.751
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	.541
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	.755
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	.805
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	.668
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	.679
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	.802
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	.777
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	.682
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	.729
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	.594
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

Factor analysis of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity measure demonstrates one factor where all loadings can be considered high. 61% of the variance was explained by the first factor.

5.6 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Component Matrix^a	Component 1
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	.703
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	.849
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	.842
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	.889
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	.549
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	.811
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

On the basis of factor analysis, in the Multicultural Ideology Scale one dimension emerges with factor loadings being high on the positive items related to multiculturalism. The highest loaded items are on the preservation of cultural heritage and recognition of multicultural composition of the society in Turkey. 32% of the variance was explained by the first factor.

5.7 Multicultural Ideology Scale Component Matrix^a	Component 1
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	.779
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	.827
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	.396
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	.704
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	.258

If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	-.014
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	.178
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	.741
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	.687
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	.325
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. R= reverse coded items	

As can be seen from Table 5.8, on the basis of factor analysis, two dimensions emerge. The first one is learning about the host country/other countries and networks with other foreign/local students. The loadings are generally very high with the highest two being “learning about other countries” and “becoming closer to other international students”. The second dimension that emerged is other students’ and teachers’ stance towards home country and culture. Again, most of the loadings are high with the highest two being host country students’ positionality towards the home domains. 42% of the variance was explained by the first factor and 21% by the second one.

5.8 Acculturative role of home and host domains		Component	
Rotated Component Matrix ^a	1	2	
Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about host country society.	.704	.332	
Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about other countries.	.917	.069	
My study brought me closer to host country people.	.810	.094	
My study brought me closer to other international students.	.895	-.128	
I exchange home visits with the host country students.	.840	.326	
I exchange home visits with the international students.	.869	.182	
Other foreign students and I have casual meetings outside the university.	.831	.060	
Other foreign students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture.R	.222	.782	
Other foreign students know nothing about my home country and culture.R	.264	.796	
Host country students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture.R	-.062	.814	
Host country students know nothing about my home country and culture.R	.232	.801	
My teachers want me to know what offends other foreign students but they don't want to know what offends me.R	-.253	.328	
Other foreign students almost always negatively talk about my home country and culture.R	.027	.722	
None of my teachers understands my problems.R	.101	.413	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a			
R= reverse scored items.			

5.2 Background of the Post-Test Respondents

22 respondents who have participated twice are Turkish citizens and 4 have residence in other countries. 4 respondents attended to public, 18 attended to foundation universities and, in sum, 9 universities were represented. Respondents were mostly 3rd and 4th year students in Social Sciences, Engineering, and Business (Tables 5.9 & 5.10). 14 graduated from Anatolian, 4 from private, 2 from private foreign, 1 from public and 1 from Science high schools. They were born in 10 different provinces from different parts of the country, the average age is 22.4, and 20 students are female. They mostly live with their families; then comes university dorm and private rental. 13 of them don't have siblings or parents who studied abroad. 19 respondents' mothers were university and high school graduates whereas 17 fathers were university and high school graduates.

Respondents' first language is Turkish and all speak English. 14 respondents also mentioned additional languages. English is stated as the instruction language in almost all cases but 5 respondents also mentioned the home country language. Their study destinations were the following: France (n=4), Germany (n=6), the Netherlands (n=8), Poland (n=1), Sweden (n=2), Czech Republic (n=1) (Table 5.11). Approximately half of the respondents (n=12) studied during the Fall semester. 19 respondents had travelled abroad before the study abroad experience; mostly for tourism (n=19) which is followed by language school (n=5), other exchange program (n=4), summer school (n=4), internship (n=3) and work-travel (n=1). 15 didn't receive orientation before departure and 20 stated their Facebook membership of an exchange group.

5.9 Home Inst Study (22 Filtered)	Frequency
Engineering	6
Business	3
Social Sciences	5
Humanities	2
Education	1
Natural Sciences	1
Vocational School	0
Law	1
Other	5
<i>Other: Letters, Aviation, Communication, Applied Sciences</i>	

5.10 Level/year of studies (22 filtered)	Frequency
2nd year	1
3rd year	12
4th year	6
Master's	3
PhD	0

5.11 Host countries (22 Filtered)	Frequency
France	4
Germany	6
The Netherlands	8
Poland	1
Other (Sweden, Czech Republic)	3

In the only Assessment Report (2009) of the National Agency of Turkey, the backgrounds of the participants were as follows: Mostly aged between 21 and 24, undergraduate students studying Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences and Management/Administrative Sciences, 52% female, studying one semester. According to the afore-mentioned report, there was considerable number of students who did not receive orientation at home and host institutions and most of the students did not have previous international travels. Some of these demographic factors (age, area of study, study period) are applicable to this research project; however, the percentage of female students and those with prior international exposure are higher in our study.

Identification & orientation

15 respondents reported being secular oriented, 2 religious oriented, 2 Atheist. 2 respondents chose “Other” and mentioned “Deist and Agnostic”. The main difference on how they see themselves between pre and post-test responses is that two respondents shifted away from “Other” to secular oriented. For 18 respondents, human and personal identities are the most important ones (9 each) whereas 1 respondent stated national, 1 stated religious and 1 ethnic.

When asked about the critical issues in the country, in the post-test, Terrorism scores 4.57 out of 5, Syrian migrants & refugees scores 4.29, Human rights, educational inequality and gender equality 4.24, each. Respondents also added the following themes under “Other issues”: *political issues, increased political division in the society, unemployment and homophobia*. In the pretest top issues were the following: Terrorism with 4.86, women’s rights with 4.43, Syrian refugees, gender equality, human rights and children rights with 4.29, each. We can suggest that the ranking of issues between pre and post-tests regarding top critical issues are mostly the same. In the conducted paired t-test, there was a significant difference (decrease) in “Ethnic discrimination” scores for pre-test ($M=6.27$, $SD=0.883$) and posttest ($M=5.45$, $SD=1.335$) conditions; $t(21)=2.96$, $p=0.007$. This decrease may be explained with the experienced or observed discriminatory attitudes and behaviors during the sojourn.

5.12 Critical Issues in Turkey (N=21)		M	SD
Pair 1	Environmental pollution	3.90	1.09
		3.62	1.24
Pair 2	Human rights	4.29	1.38
		4.24	1.30
Pair 3	Freedom of religious practice	3.90	1.33
		4.00	1.30
Pair 4	Ethnic conflict	4.05	1.28
		3.76	1.26
Pair 5	Discrimination of minorities	4.19	1.12
		4.05	1.39
Pair 6	Terrorism	4.86	0.35
		4.57	0.74
Pair 7	Ethnic discrimination	4.25	1.11
		3.90	1.21
Pair 8	Women's rights	4.43	1.12
		4.19	1.32
Pair 9	Children's rights	4.29	1.14
		4.05	1.28
Pair 10	Syrian Refugees and migrants	4.29	1.05
		4.29	0.90
Pair 11	Gender equality	4.29	1.30
		4.24	1.26
Pair 12	Educational inequality	4.19	1.32
		4.24	1.22

Respondents' self-reported identification in the post-test was the following: Turkish was primary for 19, Balkan for 1, Caucasian for 1, Other for 1; Arabic was secondary for 1, Balkan secondary for 6, Caucasian secondary for 1, Kurdish secondary for 1, non-Muslim minority secondary for 3; Turkish, Caucasian, Kurdish, non-Muslim minority were tertiary identification for 1 respondent each; non-Muslim minority was fourth for 1. These respondents' self-reported identification in the pre-test were the following: Turkish was primary for 17, Caucasian for 3, Roma for 1, non-Muslim minority 2, Other for 2 ("Even though, I do feel like Turkish and Balkan because of my family bounds, there is a fact that after Ottoman Empire, there is a chance that we might have all these ethnicities in our families without knowing and this will not make me uncomfortable.", "None", "Pontian"); Arabic was secondary for 1, Balkan secondary for 6, Caucasian secondary for 1, Kurdish secondary for 1, non-Muslim minority secondary for 3; Turkish was tertiary identification for 1.

5.13 Self-reported identification (N=22)		M	SD
Pair 1	Turkish	1.09	0.61
	Turkish	0.95	0.57
Pair 2	Arabic	0.27	0.70
	Arabic	0.09	0.42
Pair 3	Balkan	1.00	1.02
	Balkan	0.59	0.90
Pair 4	Caucasian	0.50	0.80
	Caucasian	0.27	0.76
Pair 5	Kurdish	0.36	0.79
	Kurdish	0.23	0.75
Pair 6	Zaza	0.18	0.58
	Zaza	0.00	0.00
Pair 7	Roma	0.32	0.71
	Roma	0.00	0.00
Pair 8	Non-muslim minority	0.36	0.72
	Non-muslim minority	0.59	1.18

In the pretest, respondents were asked about their reasons of study abroad and the top three selections were academic, social, and cultural, respectively. In the post-test, they were asked about the ways in which their exchange terms contributed to significantly and the top three selections were cultural, personal, and social, respectively. So, academic reasons were the fourth in the post test whereas it used to be the first in the pre-test. In the conducted paired t-test, there was a significant difference (decrease) on academic reasons scores for pre-test ($M=0.95$, $SD=0.21$) and posttest ($M=0.73$, $SD=0.45$) conditions; $t(21)=2.48$, $p=.021$. Career related as well as linguistic reasons were amongst the lowest in both tests; however, in the qualitative data, respondents especially emphasize linguistic development as an important outcome.

Table 5.14: Why study abroad & contribution of study abroad	Post-test	Pre-test 22
Academic	16	21
Career related	11	11
Linguistic	13	14
Personal	18	13
Social	17	19
Cultural	20	17

Differences between the backgrounds of pre-test respondents and post-test respondents

When the background of 22 respondents who completed both pre and post experience assessments were compared with the 48 respondents who only completed the pre-test, a similar outlook was observed. One of the differences was regarding parents' education: mothers' education level (ratio-wise) increases and fathers' education level (ratio and last conferred degree) decreases (Tables 5.15 & 5.16). Secondly, the exchange study semester for

the majority shifts from Spring to Fall (Table 5.17). Thirdly, in terms of the diversity of places of birth, the number of cities decreases from 18 to 10 (Table 5.18). Fourthly, the number of female respondents slightly increases (Table 5.19). Lastly, thoughts on the critical issues of Turkey depicted some change (Table 5.20): For the pretest 48, the top 5 issues were terrorism, Syrian refugees, ethnic discrimination, discrimination of minorities, and women's rights whereas for the pretest 22, the top 5 were terrorism, women's rights, ethnic discrimination, human rights, children's rights. The very last two issues were the same for both groups: environmental pollution and freedom of religious practice.

Table 5.15: Mothers' education level	Pre-test 48	Pre-test 22
Graduate degree	7	1
University degree	25	15
High school degree	11	4
Vocational high school degree	0	0
Secondary school degree	2	0
Primary school degree	3	2
Illiterate	0	0

Table 5.16: Fathers' education level	Pre-test 48	Pre-test 22
Graduate degree	11	3
University degree	24	12
High school degree	9	5
Vocational high school degree	1	1
Secondary school degree	1	0
Primary school degree	2	1
Illiterate	0	0

Table 5.17: Study abroad semester	Pre-test 48	Pre-test 22
2016-17 Fall/Winter	18	12
2016-17 Spring/Summer	26	9
2016-17 Full year	4	1

Table 5.18: Variety in the places of birth	Pre-test 48	Pre-test 22
	18 different cities	10 different cities in Turkey

18 İstanbul, 10 Ankara, 1 İzmir, 3 Bursa, 1 Artvin, 1 İskenderun, 1 Mersin, 2 Denizli, 1 Muğla, 1 Adana, 1 Gaziantep, 1 Samsun, 1 Edirne, 1 Antalya, 1 Hatay, 1 Kyrenia, 1 Dallas, 1 Pakistan	9 İstanbul, 3 Ankara, 3 Bursa, 1 Antalya, 1 Mersin, 1 Denizli, 1 Gaziantep, 1 Samsun, 1 Edirne, 1 İskenderun
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Table 5.19: Gender	Pre-test 48	Pre-test 22
Male	9	2
Female	39	20

Table 5.20: Critical issues in Turkey	Pretest 48 M	Pretest 22 M
Terrorism	4.56	4.86
Syrian refugees and migrants	4	4.23
Ethnic discrimination	3.96	4.32
Discrimination of minorities	3.94	4.23
Women's rights	3.94	4.45
Human rights	3.9	4.32
Children's rights	3.81	4.32
Gender equality	3.79	4.27
Ethnic conflict	3.73	4.09
Educational inequality	3.73	4.18
Environmental pollution	3.65	3.95
Freedom of religious practice	3.52	3.91

5.3 Host and Home Domain Features

Conditions at the host city, country and institution are important dimensions in defining the sojourn experience. The way students are received, perceived, welcomed and supported are all critical for the sojourn experience. To better reflect on the host-home domains, critical instances, support during difficult times, feeling of connection to different socio-cultural networks, frequency of intercultural contacts, rating host country/city in terms of welcoming international/exchange students were analyzed.

When asked to rate the host country in terms of welcoming international/exchange students, informants gave a score of 6 (1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree). They usually found the host country welcoming, people warm and helpful. They specifically mentioned special events arranged for them as well orientation activities and support during bureaucratic visits. One informant drew attention to the fact that all students present at the institution had been exposed to international experiences, which in turn made the whole process easier for incoming students. This situation demonstrates how the institution had actually internalized the importance/value of international and intercultural experiences rather than creating temporary mechanisms for students. There were only few negative concerns raised: these were concerning the local nationals and implementations (bureaucracy, language barrier, attitudes of university employees or public officers, existence of immigrants from Turkey), personal expectations (finding the environment not enriching enough), and interpersonal relations (lack of attention from the locals who are busy with their routine). When the host country rating was 6, the host city rating was 5.52 (1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree). In general, positive comments dominated the discussions that referred to the cities as “friendly and helpful locals”, “multicultural environments”, “easy to live in” and “social environments”. Few of the negative concerns were the small size of the city/village and limited nature of facilities, hygiene habits, and cold attitudes of the locals.

As can be observed from Table 5.21, respondents report to be satisfied with the general educational and socio-cultural outlook at the host destination. 12 respondents stated that the host institution was significantly different from their home institution but 17 mentioned that the academic environments were as expected. The academic environment was reported to be as expected but still few respondents refer to the new environment as being resourceful, having taken different courses and having met with extraordinary speakers that contributed to their academic portfolio and interdisciplinary approach: They provided explanations regarding the systemic differences in course contents and teaching styles, timing differences, reliance on more of self-study and more readings. Additionally, the International Office (IO) was stated to be working 2 days a week in one instance and in another the respondent was referring to how bureaucracy was handled carefully. One student especially stated they were helpful at school. 14 students shared their level of satisfaction with the services offered by the host institution and they specifically referred to the following issues: “friendly environment, quality work, good library facilities, athletic center and dorms, dorms associated with freedom, sound transportation, helpful courses and workshops.”

18 respondents reported to have made friends amongst host country nationals and 13 mentioned to have just Erasmus/international friends (Table 5.21). 16 informants reported to have lived at the dorms and these were mostly not university facilities. Only seven informants mentioned the dorms to be exclusively for international/Erasmus students and again seven informants mentioned to have classes with international/Erasmus students only. Such an outlook indicates infrastructure welcoming diversity in class and in living arrangements. On the other hand, respondents predominantly mentioned having travelled with international friends and having found out about the socio-cultural environment together with other foreign students. This outlook may suggest that spatial arrangements/boundaries between international students and locals were not very strict but they prefer to be together due to mutual needs and interests. Only few students mentioned to have stayed-socialized with other Turkish students. When students needed support, they were in touch with the international offices at the universities as well as their academic advisors/instructors. Orientation sessions and feeling financially content (having enough financial support) are important indicators of a smooth sojourn experience. 18 informants reported to have received orientation at the host institution, 15 mentioned to have enough finances and 20 stated received the Erasmus mobility grant. 16 informants reported to have improved their knowledge of the host country language.

When asked about the presence of the home country at the host destination, almost half of the respondents confirmed and especially referred to the existence of migrants in Germany and the Netherlands. They also mention the existence of other Turkish students (pursuing exchange or graduate study). Students agreed to the strong presence of their home country but they did not take part in this presence.

Table 5.21: Evaluation of the host domain (N=22)

How were the below mentioned facilities at the host institution/country?		Yes	No	Undecided	N/A
1	Was the host institution significantly different from your home institution?	12	10	-	-
2	Was the academic environment (classrooms, labs, teaching methods, resources etc.) as expected?	17	2	3	-
3	Were the facilities offered by the host institution satisfactory?	14	4	4	-
4	Did you mainly make friends among host country nationals?	18	3	1	-
5	Did you just have Erasmus/international friends?	13	8	1	-
6	Did you live at the dorms?	16	6	-	-
7	If you lived at the dorms, was it belonging to the school?	4	11	1	6
8	Was your dorm just for the international/Erasmus students?	7	8	1	6
9	Did you live in a private facility?	14	7	1	-
10	Did you have roommates?	14	8	-	-
11	Were your roommates international students?	10	7	-	5
12	Did you receive welcome/orientation sessions at the host institution?	18	4	-	-
13	Was your main official contact usually the International Office at the host institution for different issues?	16	4	1	1
14	Did you have separate classes with all Erasmus/international exchange students?	7	15	-	-
15	Did you have enough finances?	15	7	-	-
16	Did you receive the Erasmus mobility grant?	20	2	-	-
17	Did you have visa/residence permit problems?	1	20	-	1
18	Have you improved the host country language(s) during your studies?	16	4	1	1
19	Was there a strong presence of your home country where you studied?	10	7	4	1
20	Did associations/networks of your home country facilitate the daily life where you studied?	1	12	8	1

In Table 5.22, there was significant decrease in Pair 4 (Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me) scores for pre-test ($M=6.27$, $SD=.883$) and posttest ($M=5.45$, $SD=1.335$) conditions; $t(21)=2.96$, $p=.007$. In a similar fashion there is a decrease in “Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me”. (Table 5.22) These two items refer to more positive attitudes towards the host domain. The lowest scores are on pairs 1 and 2 (proud and happy of being a citizen of the home country) which may be due to the situation in Turkey stemming from the socio-political outlook. We can conclude that the changes reflected in Table 5.22 are small but attitude towards the host domains have become better and that there is also strong association with home domain factors.

Table 5.22: Acculturative role of home and host domains (N=22)		M	SD
Pair 1	I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	3.68	2.05
		3.68	1.72
Pair 2	I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	3.77	2.13
		3.86	1.64
Pair 3	Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R*	5.14	1.52
		4.77	1.57
Pair 4	Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R*	6.27	.88
		5.45	1.33
Pair 5	Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R*	5.95	1.55
		5.55	1.29
Pair 6	Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	4.14	1.67
		4.36	1.52
Pair 7	Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	5.36	1.52
		5.23	1.34
Pair 8	I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.R*	5.68	1.67
		5.73	1.42
Pair 9	I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.R*	6.00	1.30
		5.68	1.67
Pair 10	I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.R*	6.27	1.03
		6.14	.94
Pair 11	My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	5.23	1.54
		5.45	1.33
Pair 12	I have many friends from my own country.	5.77	1.27
		5.82	1.59
Pair 13	I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	4.77	1.68
		5.00	2.07
Pair 14	My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	5.77	1.34
		5.82	1.14
Pair 15	I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	5.32	1.72
		5.77	1.27
Pair 16	When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	5.23	1.87
		5.36	1.52
Pair 17	I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	5.32	2.05
		5.91	1.34
Pair 18	I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	4.64	1.67
		4.68	1.96
Pair 19	Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	5.36	1.49
		5.55	1.50
Pair 20	Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	4.23	1.51
		4.23	1.90
Pair 21	My best friends are from my country.	5.64	1.46
		5.32	1.91

*Reverse scored items.

* Pre-test scores of each pair are reflected in the first row and post-test scores in the second.

5.4 Management of Change Process

Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013) had proposed several patterns of adjustment in analyzing the sojourn experience of 20 international students and stated that low points were mainly due to homesickness, loneliness and high points were associated with career and academic success. Informants of this study have generally discussed the powerful positive experiences that span over the course of the sojourn whereas negative issues were based on instances of negative experiences. Informants have not reported any instance that changes the course of the sojourn drastically. Respondents' critical instances point at issues, processes, and actors that became defining during the experience. These experiences also provide critical learning opportunities about the society, culture, institutions besides providing clues as to the respondents' knowledge, skills, behavior and attitudes. Negative critical moments were reported under three themes: 1- Socio-cultural: Stereotypes about Turkish people and belief systems, intolerance towards minority languages, cultural differences, negative home country impressions, prejudices, intolerance, being the only Erasmus student, language barrier; 2- Logistical: negative entry to the host destination due to accommodation problems, robbery, and bureaucracy in an unknown place; 3- Institutional: poor academic performance and location of the campus. Positive critical experiences were: 1- Personal (learning self-management, discovery, setting targets for the future) and academic gains; 2- Social environment (positive encounters with faculty and friends, experienced diversity and tolerance as well as having felt socially included).

Identity Issues

One central issue was the difference between the perception and evaluation of local Turkish immigrant identity and Turkish exchange students. Informants most often heard the following from their peers: *"You don't look Turkish."*, *"You are very modern"*, *"Why do you consume alcohol or wear a skirt?"* etc. Exchange students from Turkey also saw themselves different from the local immigrants from Turkey: *"I believe that they are more conservative than a normal conservative person that lives in Turkey"*. An informant referred to the migrant population's conservative character and political affiliation in Turkey even though they had been living in a democratic and liberal society for a long time. One other student shared that local Turks were mentioning not to have visited Turkey due to security related issues right after the attempted coup which is usually a practice observed amongst foreigners who are less familiar with the country and its realities. Such an outlook can be interpreted rather peculiar due to the socio-cultural ties local migrants have in Turkey and can partially explain the ways in which local migrants and exchange students identify themselves differently. Another

emerging issue was individual vs. collective (religious, national, ethnic etc.) identities, how exchange students saw themselves and tried to establish an existence accordingly. One informant stated that to be able to survive in an intercultural setting, personal identities that are open and flexible are more important than collective ones such as nation or gender. She suggested that asking for help and establishing communication are very personal. In another informant's case it was possible to observe him clinging on to a strategic decision, not disclosing Turkishness and religious stance at first but rather putting forward mutual professional and/or social preferences in setting up connections in a new socio-cultural setting. He further explained not to have disclosed his nationality or political thoughts in France until he got closer with the people; otherwise people were reluctant to meet and know him. Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013) discuss identity adjustment and communication shifts during the course of the sojourn based on the fact that sojourners realize the need to change and become more proactive to better adjust to the environment. The afore-mentioned examples combine well with this explanation.

As a result of the increased popularity and institutionalization of the Erasmus program, its associated actors such as international student bodies (i.e. Erasmus Student Network, international student clubs, volunteers etc.) as well as formal developments across a wide geography, we can observe and argue a powerful social international/exchange student identity that has become prestigious and at the same time beneficial to identify with. Being a member of such a group/network of foreign and local students creates an environment that keeps sojourners entertained, teaches how to survive in a new setting, and assists in regards to local issues such as bureaucracy and language barrier. Having stated more tangible gains of being identified with such a group, we can also suggest gains on less tangible concerns such as the feeling of security, inclusion, predictability, connection, consistency, mainly the themes offered by the INT framework. By being members of such networks/groups of students, sojourners have the opportunity to maintain host domains that promote security, inclusion, predictability, and connection in a consistent way.

When asked whether every young person could attend the program, informants' answers targeted two directions: 1- One group was of the opinion that "Yes, everyone should benefit". 2- Another group stated that the program is not fit for everyone since personal, linguistic and academic preparedness are important determinants of a successful sojourn experience. Some informants mentioned that "there are other programs that students can benefit from and only those who are patient, strong, communicative, who can survive in another country or those who want to attain these traits must attend". Respondents were mostly conceptualizing the

personal characteristics of a sojourner as being social, open, flexible, strong and in terms of personal management able to deal with anxieties and manage expectations. They also stated that, academically speaking, proficiency in foreign languages and being successful were crucial. The results suggest the importance of personal identity from the eyes of participants besides demonstrating there is room for personal development during the course of the sojourn even if one has prior experiences.

Cultural Issues

Culture is one complex concept to understand and explain since it refers to a particular as well as whole way of living where boundaries and cultural experiences are being constructed in relation to others with the influence of multiple actors and experiences. For this very reason it is difficult to talk about fixed and pre-defined cultural representations of a given socio-cultural space that involves many actors and processes. As has been the focus on many prior studies, cultural change with positive and negative aspects, is an important reality of the sojourn experience. This section will primarily focus on the concerns and positive aspects will be discussed in the next section, under outcome factors.

Cultural differences and misunderstandings were some of the pronounced concerns by students. In general, having experienced cultural differences was put as a positive and enriching aspect but in a few instances they became negative. For instance, after giving a presentation, one respondent had faced knocking on the tables, a gesture she took very negatively but afterwards learned that it actually meant appreciation and like. One other student had expected a birthday celebration from roommates but did not happen: *“My flatmates didn't do anything for my birthday, as it was very different for my cultural background.”*

Informants' answers point at the lack of knowledge about the cultural diversity in Turkey as well as generalizations based on stereotypes stemming from prior experience and conduct (migrants, classmates etc.). Cultural generalizations, mainly in the form of stereotypes, did not reflect informants' socio-cultural backgrounds. Oftentimes exchange students heard how different they look from immigrants from Turkey: *“All German students I have met at the university other events have told us the Turkish people who live in Germany and the exchange students coming from Turkey were very different. They have found the exchange students to be more modern.”*, *“Some Turkish stereotypes were upsetting a little, as well as political situation.”* They further discussed that locals' prior exposure to/experience with people from Turkey, may create both positive and negative images so it is not possible to directly infer that in places where there are considerable migrants from Turkey, there is

familiarity with the cultures and cultural diversity. One respondent who studied in the Netherlands stated that the presence of migrants from Turkey negatively affects approach towards Turkish students. One respondent who studied in Poland stated that the approach towards people from Turkey was not negative and due to migrants there was already some familiarity. One respondent who studied in France received questions from a wide spectrum, from the president to being Muslim, consuming pork, cuisine, tv shows, marriage rituals, even if it was one of the countries hosting migrants from Turkey. One informant who studied in Germany mentioned not to have received stereotypical comments or basic questions due to the already established familiarity.

The language dimension appeared as an important one. Firstly, language, besides being an important medium and instrument for expressing and communicating, may also become an axis of contestation and polarization coupled with cultural intolerance. Few students were warned by local people in public about not to speak Turkish. Secondly, students with certain linguistic capabilities are selected in line with the program rules and implementations in Turkey. Consequently, all respondents seem to master in primarily English as well as learning other foreign languages. On the other hand, students also refer to linguistic difficulties and progress. The language remark is interesting because one of the rules of thumb of the program stated by the National Agency of Turkey is that of not being a language learning program. However, in the eyes of participants, the reality seemed to be different. Thirdly, the way English was perceived in a given locale was also an experience. For instance, students in France had difficulty communicating with the officials and locals in English.

Negative or suspicious attitudes towards the home country due to socio-cultural and political events were pronounced. Respondents received negative comments and extrapolation on the contemporary socio-cultural and political issues in the home country. One informant stated that “before departing for the home country, there were people who thought I was going to war.” The extent and nature of questions received also depended on the socio-cultural circumstances/awareness in a given locale as well as the relationship these spaces had with the home country. For instance, right after Turkey and the Netherlands had politically heated debates in the Summer of 2017, one informant in the Netherlands received considerable number of questions/comments about the political situation in Turkey. One informant who studied in Germany had been pointed at by the instructor in class and the instructor made comments about the socio-political unrest that had been affecting the educational institutions in the country. In Germany, one of the Turkish descent students

referred to Turkey as being insecure so he/she decided not to visit during the summer holidays. One informant in Germany had not really faced questions that would compare the preconceived ideas of the locals and her behavior/outlook but only questions regarding the political situation in Turkey. One informant in Poland also received questions about the “insecure” status quo in the country and most of her encounters indicated Turkey as an insecure country. One informant stated to be upset after giving a presentation about Turkey because no one showed interest in the country but in places that are less interesting.

One respondent who studied in Poland referred to the problematic nature of cultural representations and prejudices that are actually carried from the home domain to the host domain which in turn was hindering communication and dialogue amongst students from Turkey. She stated that “It was great to see everyone trying to know each other but Turks were not treating each other that way and were being ethnically and religiously intolerant towards each other.” Such an outlook conflicts with the views that suggest co-nationals as critical actors of the acculturation and adaptation process. Cultural diversity in a given national construct also becomes determining

Several informants mentioned to have experienced a reverse culture shock after going back home. One student said “*It was difficult to adapt upon return, it was even difficult to walk on the streets. It feels weird when people just bump into you.*” Another student mentioned that “*Even though I love Turkey, the real culture shock was upon my return. I had never thought of experiencing this after one semester but unfortunately the difference between Europe and Turkey is obvious...*” One other student stated that she started to have become much more critical towards Turkey after the sojourn experience. Another student’s family thought he would not be able to adapt after several experiences abroad; however, he had become much more aware, selective and had the confidence that after finding the right opportunity he could again go abroad.

Support during Difficult Times

One of the important dimensions of living and surviving in another culture is the support sojourners receive at difficult times that challenge their experience. There are different problems students face such as academic difficulties, psychological unrest, and socio-cultural adaptation issues. The existence of support networks is important not only to resolve issues but also to show students ways and means of doing so. Respondents showed a number of directions regarding having received support during their exchange terms. Parents (especially mothers) and close friends back at the home destination and roommates, international/local friends, Turkish-Dutch students, relatives who live abroad, faculty

members, International Office at the home destinations were pronounced as sources of support. Few informants mentioned to have worked on the issues themselves and not to have experienced any difficulty. Few informants mentioned to have attended the program with their best friends and they supported each other during difficult times.

Relations with Different Social Networks

Exchanging home visits with local and exchange students scored 5 and 5.18, respectively. The scores on being closer to host country people and being closer to international students were respectively 5.68 and 5.91 (Table 5.17). These results demonstrate that there is more connection to international students compared to local people. As one student put it *“They were always together as one nationality and they were not really interested in having some intercultural friendships.”* When asked about their feeling of connection to international students, four informants stated *“no or not so much”* and one especially mentioned *“just Koreans and Russians”*. The rest stated to have felt connected to other international students in a number of ways: 1- there was an analogy to being comrades since they go through similar experiences and they *“exchanged tips on a number of matters”* (teachers, where to study on campus, which cities to go to, where to eat, how to get to certain places, etc.); 2- there was also a very strategic approach to the feeling of connection *“Yes, we were getting well with each other, we were all trying to communicate and willing to spend our limited time in an efficient way.”* Hotta & Ting-Toomey (2013) emphasize the transitional and temporal nature of friendship networks during the sojourn and inclination of sojourners towards the longer-term home based relations. Such an approach coincides with the views that advocate the importance of home based networks in adjustment. On the other hand, again as stated by the same authors, friendship dialectics of feeling visible-invisible, feeling like a guest or not, friendship openness-closedness also become determining for the quality of relationship networks. As such, it is possible to argue that informants feel more invisible amongst the international groups and feel like less of a guest in such an international environment. Regarding openness and closedness, even if informants share a shorter time span compared to their home based networks, they share extraordinary experiences in a very condensed way and also continue to network over social media or meeting from time to time in different locations of the world, all of which makes the afore-mentioned international network an influential one.

Students were also asked about their feeling of connection to the host nationals, four students stated *“no/not really”*; amongst these one stated to have other Turkish friends and one stated having just international friends. Apart from the four students the general outlook

was positive regarding feeling connected to host nationals: 1- Few informants discussed having adapted to the culture at the host destination and few mentioned to have stronger ties with the local students. Two students mentioned assimilation and adaptation as a result of feeling connected: *“Yes, more than the international students. I also liked the lifestyle and found it suitable to assimilate in over time.”*; *“Yes, I mostly tried to adapt their culture and I feel really connected.”* 2- One informant particularly mentioned not as much connection to the locals as internationals but still did not feel comfortable about the idea of leaving the country.

The lines between local networks as well as international ones may not be so distinct especially due to the arrangements/activities organized by International Offices and other foreign students who have prior similar experiences. In such an environment, informants may have difficulty in framing different groups. What is important for the sake of this study is the confirmation of existence of different networks in the study abroad experience of students, their characteristics and the way they affect students’ lives. Either with strategic or comradeship aspirations, informants are attached to other groups of foreign/exchange students for numerous reasons. They mostly define the frequency of their intercultural contacts as “daily, always, frequent, and constant” to get together in their free times, spend time at the dorms/being roommates or in class. One informant mentioned to have Turkish friends only and one stated to have some interaction with student from other countries but his/her close friends being from Turkey. They mostly mention a number of countries (i.e. France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, China, Korea, Argentina, Mexico, America, Canada, Russia, Greece, Finland, Romania, India, Portugal, Austria) across a wide geography and quite international groups with activities such as travelling, dorm life, socializing, attending lectures all of which suggest interaction amongst students from different cultural backgrounds. Few students mentioned having friends from all over or many contacts whereas most of them pronounced few specific country names.

The Role of Social Media during the Sojourn Experience

Questions on the significance of social media, used applications and the reasons of social media usage during the sojourn period were posed to the informants. They mostly referred to social media channels and tools as means and ways of connecting with family, friends at the home domain and foreign students, locals at the host domains. As was expected, also in line with the previous literature, Facebook/messenger and Facebook groups turned out to be the most crucial and mostly pronounced sources of information and communication that fostered connection with the loves ones (family, friends on both sides), learning

about/connecting with the host domain stakeholders (school announcements, paperwork follow-up, cultural events, social activities, student organizations etc.), communicating with people from the host domain, logistical matters such as finding housing/selling-buying items, sharing pictures-memories of travels and daily routine, travel tips etc. Respondents were mostly members of Erasmus Student Network groups, co-nationals' information pages, host schools' exchange groups, host country exchange community groups, host city exchange groups on Facebook. Through the use of such platforms, respondents shared excerpts of their new lives during the sojourn, kept their loved ones informed, heard about the home country domain, got advice and at the same time stayed tuned about the activities, responsibilities, and important dates/duties at the host domain. Such a venue proves to be useful when one is like a new born and has to learn every simple task of a daily routine from scratch in a new place. Therefore, also in line with the studies conducted in this field, first and foremost we observe bonding-bridging practices with the local environment as well as home country domains. Secondly, we observe identity performance that Facebook and other social media venues create with lots of visuals, interest sections/groups, postings, etc. Thirdly, there are practical aspects of Facebook such as not requiring a phone number which make this platform popular and mostly selected. One student stated that since WhatsApp requires a number, Facebook gave great comfort to the students in communication. The same student mentioned that it may be difficult to remember names or one may not have the number of the person so Facebook is very crucial for communication. He also stated that "such a venue helps you connect with ones you are not very close to; for instance, you see a posting related to a friend with whom you had spent some time, you could tag their name underneath the post and in a way continue your relationship."

Few of the respondents' Facebook posts have been reviewed and analyzed to compare and contrast the information with provided answers. Their posts of the exchange term usually start at the time of departure and then continue at the host domain and across different travel destinations, attractions, including mostly peers and activities. The posts usually include pictures, location updates, tagging friends, reposting previously published/reminded pictures. It is possible to observe friends described as family which then includes celebrations and travels during special times of the year. One can observe touristic occasions but also local ones and attending important festivals in big capitals such as music festival, Oktoberfest, etc. The occasions for posting may be exchange reunions, posting Facebook reminders about exchange terms but also a simple daily routine. Staying connected is a commonly observed phenomenon, not just online but also physically. Students travel with their former exchange

connections or meet with former exchange students from their home institutions in another location. During political issues and/or security related concerns in a given locale, Facebook becomes a venue to inform others about wellbeing, send messages of sympathy/condolences to the victims or sharing feelings about what has happened at the home domain and trying to keep up the image of the country. Followers usually stated comments praising for quick adjustment as well as longing for the time abroad and being together. Informants mentioned about continuity of connection with the international networks even after the sojourn: *"We felt attached easily and built great friendships even we still keep in touch."*, *"I thought of them as my family. Even nowadays sometimes we speak with them from social media."*

Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Skype, Facetime (video/voice calls), texting were also mentioned as other venues. The former two were especially used for visual communication with the social networks and the latter ones were for verbal communication, especially with the family and friends back at home. One of the most interesting media that was mentioned by one student was Tinder, a free location-based mobile dating application. The student mentioned that it was also possible to establish friendships with the people you meet over this application. When students were asked about the sources of support at difficult times, a considerable number of them mentioned their loved ones back at home which, once again, emphasizes the importance of these tools.

The influence of social media also raises some question marks within the case of international students. As one of the respondents of this research had stated, it is possible to observe the increasing feeling of envy amongst home domain friends due to seeing polished and happy instances of studying abroad. Also, one might also consider whether maintaining strong relations with the home domains via these tools hinders better adaptation to the host domains. Based on the findings of this study, especially in critical times of the sojourn, it is possible to suggest home destination support, especially from family and friends, becomes crucial in the well-being of students. On the other hand, in most of the cases, these venues and tools are important determinants of connection to the host domain. It is also crucial to share that these virtual ties actually lead to and/or maintain physical ones that may go beyond the span of the exchange terms. So, social media usage during the sojourn helps to understand the interplay of physical and virtual worlds that surround students, connecting numerous social, cultural and political realities.

5.5 Outcome Factors

This study surfaced a number of personal, academic, cultural, and social outcomes of the sojourn that will be discussed in this section in detail. Findings suggest that most of the scale items are high both in pre/post-tests and some items demonstrate significant change. When looking at the summary item statistics (Table 5.28), a few points are crucial to mention. Firstly, ethnic identification is low compared to other scales. Secondly, Cultural Intelligence and Multicultural Ideology scales are the highest with scores 5.91 and 5.46, respectively. Informants demonstrated positive change especially in terms of learning, communication and cultural awareness. Scales about the acculturative role of home-host domains are 5.21 and 5.16, respectively, which are high but lower compared to the previous two scales. Students did not report critical issues that changed the course of the experience in a negative way and we can state that home domain factors-support, social media, exchange/international student networks emerged as important factors.

Personal Competencies

Informants rated the exchange term in terms of fostering motivation as 6.35/7. One dimension that students often emphasized in relation to fostering motivation was personal development and, to be more precise, freedom and discovering new boundaries about capabilities. As one informant described the experience “It definitely fosters the motivation. When you come back you feel like you've been refreshed”. Respondents also mentioned to have improved in terms of self-management such as time-money management, taking care of daily chores (cooking, cleaning etc.), travelling, ability to survive away from home, living alone and making individual decisions as well as skills such as “being open-minded” and “observing things from different perspectives”. In explaining the change others see in themselves, informants also referred to personal qualities: *“My family stated that I am more mature and earnest.”*, *“My family thinks my life has changed in a way that I am more straight forward, decisive, and picky.”*, *“I am better in solving problems quickly as well as planning.”*, *“My family thought that, besides becoming more mature, I started to give more importance to freedom.”*, *“Increased self-esteem, starting to focus not just on negative issues, realizing the potential in me.”* One respondent mentioned to have overcome his/her severe anxiety. Considering most of the informants had reported to be living with their families back at the home destination, the significance of having improved in terms of self-management and realization during the sojourn is even more critical.

Intercultural Competence

Cultural Intelligence items (Table 5.23) related to knowledge, cultural metacognition and skills may be considered high both in pre and post- tests with scores well above 5. The respective scale shows an overall increase from 5.72 to 5.90 (Table 5.28). The highest score is on “I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.” with 6.73 whereas the lowest score is on “I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people” with 5.45. There was significant increase in Pair 10 (I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people) scores for pre-test ($M=5.27$, $SD=1.51$) and posttest ($M=5.82$, $SD=0.95$) conditions; $t(21)=-2.10$, $p=0.042$.

Knowing cultural differences from global and personal experiences and enjoying communicating with culturally different people are higher compared to other items with scores above 6. Empathy skills are close to 6 and flexibility related skills in different cultural situations are 5.5. Metacognition items (8, 9, 10) are 5.95, 5.45 and 5.82.

5.23: Cultural Intelligence		M	SD
Pair 1	I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	6.00	1.15
		6.14	1.03
Pair 2	I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	6.36	.65
		6.50	.67
Pair 3	I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	6.45	.80
		6.73	.55
Pair 4	I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	5.59	1.46
		5.91	1.06
Pair 5	I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	5.91	1.26
		6.09	.75
Pair 6	I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	5.09	1.60
		5.45	1.22
Pair 7	I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	5.27	1.27
		5.50	1.05
Pair 8	I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	5.73	1.16
		5.95	.99
Pair 9	I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	5.59	1.18
		5.45	1.18
Pair 10	I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	5.27	1.51
		5.82	.95
Pair 11	I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	5.59	1.26
		5.64	1.36
Pair 12	I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	5.73	1.85
		5.73	1.60

* Pre-test scores of each pair are reflected in the first row and post-test in the second.

Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC) item scores may also be considered high both in pre and post-tests with scores well above 5 (Table 5.24). There is increase between the pre and post-test results on items related to communication, social interaction, learning, and creating synergies (pairs 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12). The highest score is on one of the learning related items “When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.” with 6. There was significant increase in one of the communication items, Pair 5 (I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.) scores for pre-test ($M=5.19$, $SD=1.20$) and posttest ($M=5.67$, $SD=1.15$) conditions; $t(20)=-2.30$, $p=.029$. There was marginally significant increase in one of the communication related items, Pair 2 (I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.) scores for pre-test ($M=5.00$, $SD=1.00$) and posttest ($M=5.38$, $SD=0.80$) conditions; $t(20)=-1.8$, $p=.072$. These results are in line with the information conveyed by the informants, which refer to the significance of program outcomes in terms of communication and learning.

The overall experience was evaluated as 6.25/7 in terms of fostering learning. In one of the learning related items, there was significant increase in “I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language”. Additionally, learning about host country society (6.23) as well as other foreign countries (6.05) received the highest scores in the respective scale (Table 5.29). In TMIC (Table 5.24), the highest scored item was on “using various sources of information when planning trip abroad” with 6. Informants approached learning from different angles. Having acquired new knowledge, having studied different topics, having experienced different learning environments/diversity, language learning-development, solidifying future academic plans as well as learning to learn were explicitly stated by the respondents: *“Most of my courses were taught in French and in the begging, my French was not good, so it forced me so much and affected my learning skills but after, I improved my French and started to be a part of the class.”*; *“I didn't know that I was able to study a different topic than my own studies. By these two exchange, I studied two different study programmes and I succeeded to pass my exams.”*; *“This is a unique experience. People you met, new information and learning style, group projects open your mind to learn more and better.”*; *“IUBH is one of the leading business schools in Germany, and is a small but successful university housing great lecturers.”*; *“the instructors especially in application lectures just teach us the main parts and expected us to learn more by ourselves, I learned how to learn”*; *“... I learned that I can travel to the other countries alone. I wouldn't expect it from myself but at the end, it's been 14 countries.”*; *“I feel like I did not know anything about what was going on in other countries. The shock of not know anything, motivated me to learn and open my eyes to world.”*; *“I learned lots of new things that I think will affect my future career.”*

Academically speaking, most of the respondents reported to have completed enough credits in line with the general framework of the program. In line with the program rules, students are expected to take and succeed in 30 ECTS/semester; however, due to academic and/or systemic reasons they may end of taking fewer credits or in some cases more credits. Three respondents reported to have completed more than 30, 13 respondents reported to have completed 20 or more credits, 5 respondents between 10 & 20 and 1 reported less than 10 credits. Usually, informants of this study take a broader look at learning and do not focus on just academics; however, as one informant stated and as some students might expect, the social and cultural aspects of the experience may be more dominant that adversely affect academic expectations and outcomes: *“To party lovers, the school and the city were the best.*

However, for international students who were passionate about art or learning culture, the school was weak.”

As can be gleaned from informants’ responses, establishing contacts and new group memberships was an important part of the experience: *“My most positive experience was being a part of a group member of a group full of peer Dutch girls except one Arabic girl. They appreciated me. Their attitude toward my culture was unbiased even though they did not know anything about my country except the presence of Islam.”*; *“The development of our language and acquiring different friendships also influenced me in the positive direction.”*; *“The ability to communicate with foreign people has improved.”* On the other hand, this process seems to involve some concerns. There was marginally significant decrease in one of the social interaction items, Pair 8 (When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.) scores for pre-test ($M=5.48$, $SD=1.25$) and posttest ($M=5.10$, $SD=1.33$) conditions; $t(20)=1.8$, $p=.072$ and the lowest scored item is again another social interaction item “I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.” with 4.05. In a similar fashion, on social interaction related items, building relationships and positioning of oneself in a group decreased. Three items of social interaction stay between 3.9-4.8 in both pre and posttests, showing the lowest values of Table 5.24. One other interesting result is on items related to creating synergies: mediating between conflicting views increased but highlighting mutual benefits in group work decreased. Considering the central position of social dimension, communication and the need to manage different networks during the course of a sojourn, it may be considered unconventional to observe lower scores and/or decrease on these afore-mentioned items, especially considering the former experiences of informants. This outlook may be due to experienced difficulties or interpreted as items that need further progress (cultivating contacts, having a large network of professional contacts, positioning oneself within a group). Few of the negative experiences reported by the informants’ were the following: *“the difficulty of making friends”*, *“being the only Erasmus student”*, *“not finding the desired social connections”*.

5.24 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence TMIC (N=21)		M	SD
Pair 1	The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	5.33	1.71
		5.33	1.56
Pair 2	I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	5.00	1.00
		5.38	.81
Pair 3	I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	5.24	1.41
		5.19	1.25
Pair 4	I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	4.95	1.20
		5.29	.78
Pair 5	I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	5.19	1.21
		5.67	1.16
Pair 6	When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	5.76	1.18
		6.00	1.09
Pair 7	I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	5.24	1.45
		5.57	1.21
Pair 8	When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	5.48	1.25
		5.10	1.34
Pair 9	I find it easy to position myself within a group.	4.86	1.42
		4.62	1.66
Pair 10	I have a large network of professional contacts.	4.52	1.63
		4.67	1.49
Pair 11	I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	3.90	1.41
		4.05	1.53
Pair 12	I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	4.81	1.29
		5.05	1.32
Pair 13	When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	5.67	1.16
		5.33	.97
Pair 14	I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	5.33	1.39
		5.33	1.19
Pair 15	I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	5.67	1.11
		5.19	1.63

** Pre-test scores of each pair are reflected in the first row and post-test in the second.*

Cultural awareness and knowledge were important outcomes of the informants' experience. There was a significant increase in "I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people." (Table 5.23) Also, being aware of cultural differences and empathy reflected high scores (Table 5.23). Cultural experiences of the sojourn can firstly be defined as awareness and knowledge about different cultures and cultural practices. They specifically refer to being exposed to new/different people, friends and ideas; having realized not knowing much about other countries; having experienced different routines: *"I feel like I did not know anything about what was going on in other countries. The shock of not know anything, motivated me to learn*

and open my eyes to world.”; “Meaningful experience in terms of meeting people with different backgrounds and taking part in their society/life for a short period”. Another cultural outcome was the recognition and appreciation of cultural similarities/differences across locations: “I started dating a Dutch person and felt comfortable because upon some time, I started to recognize most feelings and behavioral patterns that are universal, although the expression changes a little.”; “When my German friends had their birthday, they ordered a pizza without pork for me. It was extremely thoughtful and I will never forget that. Also, my German friends never said no when I wanted to see a place with them. They always had time for me even though I know German people are really strict with their schedule.”; “One of my Dutch friends gave me his cousin's bike when mine was broken and let me use it for 2 weeks without any offer in return.” Starting to question prejudices and developing empathy were also outcomes of the experience: “I think contrary to what is believed Polish are very warm-blooded people. I have some Polish friends and all of them so polite and funny to me.”; “I learned how to look my country from the other's perspective. It's still so strange for me. The lowest items of the scales may be considered as points that need further progress compared to higher scored items. On cultural issues, these are “changing behavior to suit different cultural situations and people” and “thinking about the influence that culture has on behavior” which are related to empathy skills and metacognition.

Informants with prior intercultural experiences, having acquired skills and knowledge, were able to take a broader transnational outlook on their experiences and clearly define different stages of going abroad. Consequently, they also took a comparative look and discuss the different ways in which these experiences contributed to their development. For instance, one student who had several exchanges mentioned this particular one being more academic which in turn improved her academic self-esteem. She stated to have initial doubts about her own capacity which was replaced by higher self-confidence. Another experienced student especially emphasized the importance of different outcomes with every intercultural experience. Learning about personal limits, becoming more tolerant towards minorities/LGBT individuals, change in consumption patterns (consuming less meat and second hand shopping after becoming interested in the Green Party during Dutch elections) were also pronounced. One student with a number of exchange experiences mentioned that she had different culture shocks with each experience even if she had done all her exchanges in Europe -- when she was on exchange in Norway she was mostly with locals and had a Norwegian host family but in the Netherlands she was mostly with international students. One student mentioned to have a Mexican roommate and she saw the country as a place to visit with which she had never

established an interest previously. She further added that they discovered many commonalities regarding daily rituals, public domains and now she thinks about paying a visit to the country.

There are stereotypes and as different groups come into contact, these frames of reference start changing and expanding. Host domain actors become aware of the cultural diversity in Turkey and informants' start to discover that host domain actors may not fit into the stereotypes they had been exposed to. Only in one instance immigrants from Turkey in the Netherlands were mentioned as a source of support; otherwise, the difference between the socio-cultural profiles of immigrants from Turkey and the informants were taken adversely. The existence and emphasis on the difference between exchange students and immigrants from Turkey can also be read as an extension of the deepening socio-cultural and political divide in contemporary Turkey.

Identities

Respondents' self-reported identification was primarily and mostly Turkish but a considerable number of them had also reported secondary and tertiary affiliations. Again for most of them (18) human and personal identities were the most important ones. Additionally, most of them showed a secular orientation. As is presented in the Table 5.25, their affiliation to Turkishness was generally low and not strongly associated with religion. Being born from Turkish parents, being raised as a Turkish person, speaking Turkish defined their Turkishness more strongly compared to the meaning of Turkish history and cultural heritage. We can infer that respondents felt more linked to the factual and objective dimensions compared to more abstract and subjective ones such as cultural heritage, history, norms/values etc. In the post-test, "being Muslim, speaking Turkish, looking Turkish" demonstrated a slight increase. "Living in accordance with the Turkish values, knowing about religion, being born from Turkish parents, being raised up as a Turkish person, being proud of cultural heritage, meaning of Turkish history" all demonstrated slight decrease. The afore-mentioned changes may be explained with experiencing host domains' perceptions on "being from Turkey" as well as having faced with comparisons between exchange students and immigrants from Turkey. There was a significant decrease in the Pair 4 (I know a lot about my religion.) scores for pre-test ($M=1.36$, $SD=1.25$) and posttest ($M=1.00$, $SD=.756$) conditions; $t(21)=2.16$, $p=.042$. This decrease may be due to increased self-awareness as a result of the sojourn experience that especially compares informants with migrants from Turkey.

5.25 Ethnic Identification Paired Samples Statistics (N=22)		M	SD
Pair 1	I speak Turkish.	2.82	1.18
		2.91	1.34
Pair 2	I am a Muslim	1.14	.99
		1.45	1.22
Pair 3	I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	2.27	1.42
		2.09	1.31
Pair 4	I know a lot about my religion.	1.36	1.26
		1.00	.76
Pair 5	I was born from Turkish parents.	3.27	1.08
		3.14	1.28
Pair 6	I was raised as a Turkish person.	3.00	1.23
		2.45	1.41
Pair 7	I look Turkish.	1.55	1.22
		1.68	1.29
Pair 8	I am proud of my cultural heritage.	2.23	1.23
		2.05	1.33
Pair 9	Turkish history means a lot to me.	2.36	1.36
		2.32	1.32

Attachment to ethnic group membership as well as exploration and understanding of ethnic group membership were low both in pre and post-tests. This result, again, is in line with the afore-mentioned results: Students do not feel strong about ethnic group membership. The lowest scores were observed in items regarding belonging and attachment whereas the highest score was observed in “talking to other people in order to learn more about ethnic group”. The highest positive change was on item “trying to find out more about the ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs” and the highest negative change is on items “feeling strong attachment towards own ethnic group and talking often to other people in order to learn more about his/her ethnic group.” We can suggest that exploration related items are higher than commitment ones in the post-test results.

5.26 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised Paired Samples Statistics (N=21)		M	SD
Pair 1	I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	3.76	1.55
		4.05	1.36
Pair 2	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	3.43	1.69
		3.43	1.50
Pair 3	I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	4.10	1.55
		3.95	1.50
Pair 4	I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	3.81	1.57
		4.00	1.82
Pair 5	I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	4.29	1.45
		4.00	1.67
Pair 6	I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	3.48	1.81
		3.19	1.75

It is possible to infer that respondents' stance on multiculturalism is welcoming both in general terms but also for the case of Turkey. They encourage recognition and promotion of multiculturalism as well as its positive impetus towards resolving societal problems (Table 5.27). There was significant decrease in Pair 1 (I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.) scores for pre-test (M=6.24, SD=1.37) and posttest (M=5.62, SD=1.85) conditions; $t(20)=2.08$, $p=.050$. Under normal circumstances one would expect an increase after having experienced a multicultural environment during the sojourn. This decrease may be traced to observed and experienced concerns/problems in multiethnic structures. The multicultural ideology scale shows an increase from 5.3 to 5.5 (Table 5.23).

5.27 Multiculturalism Paired Samples Statistics (N=21)		M	SD
Pair 1	I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	6.24	1.38
		5.62	1.86
Pair 2	Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	6.05	1.36
		5.86	1.49
Pair 3	People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	5.52	1.94
		5.62	1.69
Pair 4	A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	5.29	1.95
		5.10	1.73
Pair 5	The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	4.67	2.11
		5.33	1.98
Pair 6	If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	4.10	2.10
		4.71	1.98
Pair 7	A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	4.00	2.03
		4.33	1.65
Pair 8	Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	5.95	1.59
		6.29	.72
Pair 9	Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	5.43	1.63
		5.81	.98
Pair 10	Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	5.62	1.63
		6.19	1.40

Table 5.28 Summary Items*	M (Pre-test)	SD	M (Post-test)	SD	N
Ethnic Identification Scale	2.22	0.75	2.12	0.68	9
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM—R)	3.81	0.34	3.73	0.36	6
Acculturative role of the home/host communities	5.22	0.76	5.21	0.69	21
Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)	5.18	0.47	5.18	0.47	15
SFCQ Scale (Cultural Intelligence)	5.72	0.42	5.91	0.40	12
Multicultural Ideology Scale	5.29	0.79	5.46	0.54	10
Post-test Acculturative role of the home/host communities.	N/A	N/A	5.16	0.96	14

**All items are on a 7-point Likert scale except for the Ethnic Identification which is rated between (1) very unimportant and (4) very important.*

Transfer of Skills

In order to better reflect on the program outcomes and analyze the effects of the program, students were asked whether they transferred skills gained during the exchange to their daily lives and if yes how they did so. Their answers can be grouped under four dimensions which again connect to the program outcomes that were previously explained. Respondents discussed change in personal, cultural, social, and linguistic accounts rather than analytically elaborating on how they would transfer skills to their daily lives and routines back at home. Regarding personal accounts, communication, patience, empathy, open-mindedness, self-management turned out to be the emerging themes. At the cultural front, European way of living, use of public spaces, different practices, lives, and rituals were pronounced. Socially speaking, daily routine/practices, travel, part time work were discussed. Regarding language, improved knowledge, practice and communication were underlined. Students may actually realize how the experience would affect them in the medium to longer term after a certain time passes and such an approach could tell more about how they transferred skills gained during their sojourn period as they study, work, volunteer or take on different positions and responsibilities in life.

Informants' attitude towards prospective international experiences may be considered one dimension of transferring from prior experiences. They were asked about their thoughts on attending the program again and their plans on studying/working in a foreign country in

the future. As has been expected, most of the respondents were open about new international experiences as well as living abroad. 3 respondents were undecided and 19 had plans of living abroad for work or study purposes. Informants generally referred to the experience as being “nice, quality, freeing, great, priceless, and fun”. They would consider doing it again due to travel opportunities, establishing new connections, experiencing different academic culture, managing life alone, linguistic development: *“Yes, definitely I would love to attend once more because I had so much fun as well as very special and valuable moments. That's why I would love to create I there moments like the ones I have already.”*, *“I think being in any foreign country, and breathe there is great :)”*, *“if there were enough grants and as a utopia if there was no such situation like being far behind my education, I would go a thousand times.”* Only one student was negative and stated that “No. It was a little bit hard for me and I really missed my life in my country”. Few students mentioned “not Erasmus but other international experiences” or not having the finances or time. One respondent, in line with previous contacts and exchanges, had already pursued further study in a foreign country that is known to her (one of her former exchange destinations). Another informant mentioned “Germany” as a planned destination due to diversity and immigration implementations. We can conclude that in general mobility attracts mobility and that some informants even had set plans for the near future.

Host Domain Factors

In general host country and city related experience can be considered positive and enriching. Informants were asked to score their host countries and cities in terms of welcoming international/exchange students and they gave 6 and 5.5, respectively. The mean values for learning new things about host country and other countries, being closer to host country and international students are high, all well above 5 (Table 5.29). Being closer to international students and exchanging home visits with international students are slightly higher compared to being closer to host country people and exchanging home visits with host country people. Teachers’ understanding of the respondents seems acceptable with low values on items 11 and 13. Two of the relatively high scores on negative items are “9-Host country students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture” with mean 4.50 and “7-Other foreign students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture” with mean 4.59. Considering the level of knowledge foreigners had of the home country/culture of the respondents (items 8 and 10), the questions about home country and culture may stem from the current debates and events in the country.

Informants mentioned about student committees, support of International Offices and faculty members, useful welcome days as well as nice/warm people they met during the sojourn: *"They had an amazing orientation about what we could face during our stay. They were there for us 7/24."*; *"The international office was very welcoming and they tried to explain and answer any question we asked. Orientation week was also very warm."*; *"They were very helpful, they dealt with the stuff like accompanying you to the some government offices where you need to speak german because they do not speak english or they were always making you feel free to ask for help about anything"*; *"they had a student committee and they were organizing events regularly, it was a good environment for communication and to help each other."*; *"I believe that International Office is working pretty well. As well as the migration office. Our school helped us a lot about paperwork with migration issues. I think this was really effective."*

One issue regarding the unwelcoming nature of the host domain was the city being small: *"difficulty of living in a little and free city"*; *"I was staying in a small village called Oestrich -Winkel so it wasn't a really city center and thus has only limited facilities which was hard to get used to. So it was not very welcoming."*; *"There was nothing for international students except one coffee-shop.:("* Another raised concern was the short study abroad period: *"... which makes it difficult to do everything at once"*. Several informants mentioned the social distance with the locals: *"But I don't like their food and I do not think they're clean. Their behaviour is so cold for me."* *"There was a significant language barrier in France which I think affected my interaction with the host country."* *"people did not care much about other people and seemed to be busy with their own lives"* Formal procedural concerns were also raised: *"The only problem was the insurance. I had an insurance when I got there but they didnt accept it and made me pay for another insurance which i think they have some sort of agreement."* *"When I wanted to stay in the country for 3 more days they did not give it to me. Because there was international christmas and I took a late date to see it. But they dont help to me. I was foreign there, they should helped me. Because of this situation lastly time I don't like their behaviour."* Finally, one other concern was that the school and city were observed to be suitable for those with priorities in enjoying their time and socializing.

Table 5.29 Acculturative role of home and host domains (N=22)		M	SD
1	Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about host country society.	6.23	.75
2	Through my study, I have managed to learn lots of things about other countries.	6.05	.95
3	My study brought me closer to host country people.	5.68	1.21
4	My study brought me closer to other international students.	5.91	1.26
5	I exchange home visits with the host country students.	5.00	1.90
6	I exchange home visits with the international students.	5.18	1.96
7	Other foreign students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture.*	4.59	1.59
8	Other foreign students know nothing about my home country and culture.*	3.91	1.63
9	Host country students ask me stupid questions about my home country and culture.*	4.50	2.06
10	Host country students know nothing about my home country and culture.*	3.27	1.80
11	My teachers want me to know what offends other foreign students but they don't want to know what offends me.*	2.27	1.20
12	Other foreign students almost always negatively talk about my home country and culture.*	3.18	1.86
13	None of my teachers understands my problems.*	1.59	.85
14	Other foreign students and I have casual meetings outside the university.	5.45	1.84

**Non-reverse calculations are presented in this table.*

5.6 Conclusion

Discovery and experiential learning describe the experience of the respondents which stretch out to personal, cultural, social and to some extent academic realms. These gains involve discovery about personal skills such as ability to survive alone, becoming aware of cultural differences and similarities, experiencing different academic resources, facing new realities, and becoming socially skilled to administer relations at different levels. However, informants do not really discuss how these newly acquired knowledge, skills and attitude could be transferred to their lives. The most significant outcomes were observed on the following items: 1- decrease in seeing “Ethnic discrimination” as a critical issue in Turkey, academic outcomes of the sojourn, “Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me”, “I know a lot about my religion”, “I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country”; 2- increase in “I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people”, “I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language”.

It is possible to observe progress regarding language skills, learning, self-management, communication/connection with a number of international and local actors and becoming aware of new cultural realities. Besides these positive aspects, negative experiences can also be grouped under two headings: one dimension was the logistical matters such as quality of

accommodation and bureaucracy in a new setting, the second dimension was socio-cultural issues such as feeling different, encountering/observing cultural intolerance, adaptation difficulties, and generalizations towards people from Turkey as well as negative perceptions about migrants from Turkey. There were numerous identity issues such as the recognition and influence of sojourner/international student identity, juxtaposition of migrants and exchange students from Turkey even if they share a common cultural heritage, religion and language, utilization of more strategic identities such as professional ones over the course of the sojourn, and the significance of flexible and humanistic personal identities over collective ascribed ones such as religion and nationality. Regarding the influence of antecedent factors, prior international experience, features of home and host domains, and support networks emerge as critical points. Results do not directly suggest system level change but the responses point at some system level change that may be implemented at institutional, governmental and intergovernmental levels. Detailed notes on this issue will be discussed in the next section as part of the Discussion part.

Chapter 6: Discussion & Conclusion

6.1 Overview of Findings

This section will first focus on the discussion of the findings vis-à-vis former international and national studies conducted on sojourners. Then, it will present a brief summary of the program outcomes, including intercultural competence and identity issues. The subsequent subsections will include a thorough discussion on the implications of the programs as well as inherent paradoxes.

In terms of study fields, year of studies, and gender balance, findings of this research are in line with the Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey (2009) and the average Erasmus student profile of the Commission. As opposed to the 2009 Impact Assessment, the socio-cultural backgrounds of the informants demonstrate prior international experience. In a similar fashion, as opposed to former studies on the socio-cultural background of the society and youth in Turkey, informants of this study report to be more open and resourceful in terms of cultural understanding, intercultural interaction, and diversity. Regarding outcomes of the experience, in line with former national studies, (inter)personal gains (Demir & Demir, 2009; Kasapoğlu Önder & Balcı, 2010; Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey, 2009; Ünlü, 2015), exposure to cultural diversity and knowledge (Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey, 2009; İler, 2013; Ünlü, 2015) as well as language development (Impact Assessment of the National Agency of Turkey, 2009) dominated the answers. Regarding challenges associated with the experience, financial constraints, linguistic difficulties, cultural bias were again in line with former studies (Ersoy, 2013; ESI Report, 2014; Önen, 2017; Yağcı, 2010; Yaprak, 2013). Even if students seem to be from more fortunate backgrounds in terms of educational and cultural capital and experience, positive and negative experiences do not diverge from former impact studies and research.

There is a rich literature on sojourners at the international level that focuses on motivational factors, home and/or host destination characteristics, a multitude of program outcomes including language acquisition, (negative) socio-cultural issues of the sojourn, acculturation/adjustment/adaptation, socio-cultural networks of sojourners, identity as well as intercultural competence/communication in relation to developing global mindsets, pre-existing demographic characteristics and life experience, duration of stay, exposure to various cultures/diversity of contact, and acquiring different sets of cultural knowledge, and self-management. Within the scope of this research, also parallel to former

international studies, findings vis-à-vis the influence of home and host domain resources, different facets and levels of intercultural competence as well as identity issues became central. In line with the findings of former international research (Cemalcilar et al., 2005; ESN Survey, 2008; ESN Survey, 2015; Galchenko & Van de Vijver, 2006), different social networks were present that affected informants' experience at the host destination and exchange/foreign student identity was an influential one. Another notable outcome of this study was the different identification of migrants and exchange students from Turkey in the eyes of participants as well as their networks, even though these two groups share a mutual cultural heritage. Secondly, by taking a detailed and comprehensive approach towards understanding participants' intercultural competence, this study confirmed the importance of cultural awareness and knowledge, recognition and appreciation of cultural similarities/differences, learning to adjust to different cultural situations, and increased international connectedness as a result of the sojourn. Even if participants of the study were more advantageous in terms of their backgrounds and prior international experience, the sojourn proves to be a favorable and memorable period of their lives despite difficulties and tensions in social, academic and cultural realms. The experience was a powerful learning context socio-culturally and to some extent academically, progress in terms of different aspects of intercultural competence was experienced, interplay of different identities was an essential influence, and a balanced interaction of home and host domain factors were important especially for short-term opportunities.

Program Outcomes and Intercultural Competence

In the silver anniversary celebrations of the Erasmus program, the slogan “Erasmus Changing Lives Opening Minds for 25 Years” stands out.²³ Based on former studies, it is possible to conclude that it is an appropriate slogan to describe the overall experience from the eyes of its beneficiaries. All these years the program has established communities of practice across a wide geography with shared proceedings and an overall framework; however, contextualization becomes very important in defining different aspects of the experience. Hauvette (2010, p. 47) suggested that “European youth have a much greater opportunity, or ability, to be mobile compared to their adult counterparts, being less encumbered with personal or professional responsibilities and perhaps also less attached to their specific places of origins.” Being students and benefitting from numerous mutual spaces,

²³ Retrieved from:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/publications/2012/erasmus25_en.pdf

transnational ties and tools, university students from Turkey also share more opportunities with their counterparts in Europe with the initiation of this program. On the other hand, they also encounter challenges as they try to navigate through the socio-cultural capital acquired via various media at the nexus of a rapidly changing transnational space as well as financial and socio-cultural obstacles.

The sojourn can be defined as an academic but more notably a socio-cultural engagement towards becoming more conversant in daily routines in a transnational space. As the study suggests, the scope and scale of global education practices are not only confined to the acquisition of academic knowledge but also comprise of personal gains which in turn highlight the influence of informal educational experiences. In this respect, it is critical to underline students' (inter)personal, cultural and to some extent academic achievements which in turn lead to multiple forms of discovery and freedom. Informants scored high in most of the scales, except for the ethnic identification items, with mean values between 5 and 6. Learning/ knowledge, communication, and personal gains were important during the course of the sojourn. They reported to have progressed especially in terms of cultural awareness and knowledge as well as establishing intercultural contacts. Even experienced students reported to have gained new perspectives with different international and intercultural encounters. There was a significant increase in "being aware of the need to plan a course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people". Informants travelled, studied, and socialized in culturally different environments with the existence of numerous cultural realities, which might have contributed to an increase in this item. Discovering new places and routines, travelling to unknown destinations, language development, managing daily routines as well as responsibilities all contribute to the feeling of freedom which in turn makes students more aware, capable and self-sufficient. Items on having learned about host country and other countries reflected high scores with means above 6. Informants also reported to be closer to international students. From an academic point of view, the overall satisfaction with the host institutions demonstrate that informants do not report substantial difference between home and host domains; they usually refer to some different teaching methods, lecturers and courses. Most of the respondents study at reputable and successful institutions in Turkey, which have positions in international and national rankings, demonstrate numerous international networks, teaching, research, student resources and host exceptional faculty members. Therefore, we may also suggest that academic outcomes did not turn out to be central and academic expectations/outcomes were not the main lines of differentiation for the respondents of this study. We should also add that former studies on

this subject also emphasize the greater impact of non-academic outcomes. From observations in the field, it is possible to suggest that students from Turkey may even realize that various resources at their home institutions are more accessible, especially if they are from private/foundation universities with ample available student resources and support for socio-cultural and professional development and/or from leading research universities.

Background/prior experiences, ethnic vitality, friendship networks, home-host domain resources were necessary to consider in the case of respondents' experience. Results of this study confirm the importance of various layers of friendship networks but not necessarily ethnic ties. About ethnic ties, firstly, students' ethnic affiliation was not strong. Secondly, due to the existence of migrants from Turkey, students experienced an atmosphere in which they were compared to this population which is usually defined to be very different by other social networks. Thirdly, students also thought that the two groups were distinct and local Turkish immigrants depicted a more negative outlook with their political and cultural preferences. Lastly, also due to students' limited time and short stay, even for pragmatic reasons they may not have felt the need to establish and cultivate ties with ethnic institutions/actors abroad. When it comes to friendship networks of respondents, it is possible to observe the existence and influence of co-nationals, host nationals and non-compatriot foreign students; however, the extent and frequency depend on individual students' preferences as well as host domain arrangements. In general, informants were in touch with mostly non-compatriot foreign students as well as host nationals. There were few students who reported to have Turkish friends only, a rather exceptional situation since it is common to hear students from Turkey spending time with their co-nationals during the sojourn experience. As one student clearly explained her case, students from Turkey had tension amongst themselves due to prejudices and stereotypes which may be a reason not to get connected. One other reason may be the low number of co-nationals in a given locale. Last but not the least, with the influence of former education/acquired capital, students may think socializing only with the co-nationals would hinder taking advantage of the program and associated diversity.

Based on former studies, it can be inferred that language is a critical determinant and outcome of participating in an international study abroad experience. In this study, some informants discussed it as a barrier to social interaction as they were struggling to resolve travel issues and bureaucracy in a given locale whereas there were also informants who received warnings from locals about not to speak their first language. Participants also stated that enough linguistic preparedness is crucial for benefitting from such an international opportunity in a more efficient way. All respondents spoke English and half of them stated

knowledge about second or third languages. Considering respondents' language knowledge and even if linguistic outcomes were not stated in the top three in the post-test, the issue emerged frequently in the post-experience qualitative assessment. Informants were taking courses mostly in English and communicating with other foreign students and locals in English. There were instances where students could not understand each other so they stated to have used signs. Informants were taking a comparative approach and stating that their language has improved, but as can be traced from their responses to open-ended questions, writing, vocabulary, and grammar still seem to be a concern. In the conducted paired t-test between pre and post surveys, there was significant difference on the item "I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language." which demonstrates an aspect of linguistic development/learning.

There is a wide array of studies that confirm integration is the strategy most preferred by sojourners, migrants, refugees and indigenous people (Ward, 2008). We can suggest that the respondents of this study seemed to be more integrated to the exchange/international student domains in a more pragmatic fashion. Speaking from the procedural and formal aspects, arrangements for short term exchange students are enforced by the European Commission, as part of inter-institutional agreements and inherent evaluation mechanisms. For this reason, special arrangements and groups that support students' lives have turned out to be typical practices.²⁴ Based on the critical instances and the continuation of communication with established networks as well as students' future plans, we can infer that their adjustment was successful. Some students reported to be closer to the host country nationals and some to the international/foreign networks (only few mentioned co-nationals); taking into consideration this diverse outlook, they do not report critical issues that leave them out or change the course of the experience in a negative way. Informants continue their communication with the established international networks even after the respective term. Moreover, some had thought of prolonging the study abroad term, stated the wish to do an exchange again and/or thought of other international plans for the near future such as attending to different international programs (such as graduate study and internships). It is difficult to discuss full integration to the local lives and environments due to the short time frame as well as international environments/groups that dominate students' socialization patterns. However,

²⁴ Institutions must determine and explain the ways and means of providing support to international students in the formal inter-institutional agreements. Moreover, students are actually asked how institutions performed with regards to answering their academic and logistical needs/concerns in the post experience survey forwarded by the European Commission reporting tool.

we might argue that this is the reality for short term students and that encounters with other foreign students are the norm rather than the exception. During the sojourn, support from both home and host domains seemed sufficient and no respondent mentioned an overarching problem that they could not cope with. Positive critical moments seemed to be continuous and mostly referred to the program outcomes whereas negative critical moments mostly refer to certain events and happenings which in turn suggest the overall positive outlook of the experience. Consequently, no respondent reported an instance that has changed the course of his/her exchange period. The influence of home and host domains, mainly family and friends on both sides, were vital, especially via social media tools and venues.

In terms of transfer of any skills gained during the sojourn to their daily lives, students generally refer to the program outcomes by underlining skills, knowledge and attitudes such as becoming more patient, communicative, understanding, and open-minded and/or developments on self-management, experiencing travels and linguistic skills. We cannot observe how they actually (plan to) utilize the knowledge or experience gained abroad in their daily routines, studies, work, and personal relations back at home. Few relevant points may be considered having used and appreciated public transportation as well as the acquired academic knowledge; however, no specific examples regarding the home country related issues were mentioned. For instance, there was no mention of how language learning/usage or improved communication would contribute to their lives upon return. Along similar lines, there was no discussion of how open-mindedness, empathy, and multiculturalism would affect their lives after the experience. This issue could very well be a discovery they would make after certain time passes and also coupled with subsequent experiences and exposure; however, since the informants of this study demonstrate prior international and intercultural exposure, one expects to observe some reflection. One very crucial point to mention here is the strong urge to experience further international opportunities, be it the same program or others. Most of the informants approached other international opportunities positively and a few of them even reported concrete plans.

Identities

In order to analyze the linguistic identity of Sephardic Jews in Bulgaria, Fay & Davcheva (2014) define five zones of interculturality where the first one is the (intra-) personal (zone of internal dialogue), the second one is the domestic (zone for the family), the third one is the local (zone for the Sephardic community in Bulgaria), the fourth one is the diasporic (zone for the wider Sephardic Jewish community), and the fifth one is the international (international community of Spanish-speakers). Considering the existence of

different zones vis-à-vis interculturalism is useful to position and analyze the influence of different actors in sojourners' lives and identification. As authors suggest, stories are contextual and demonstrate the zones in which individuals perform their multiple identities in ever-changing contexts (Fay & Davcheva, 2014). For the informants of this study, there are similarities with the afore-mentioned zones of interculturality in the sense that personal, familial, local/host culture, home/heritage culture, and international domains offer different opportunities and challenges for the interplay of identities. Kim (1988) frames intercultural identity as "an inclusive viewpoint that represents more than one cultural perspective - either the home culture or the host culture, but at the same time, transcends both groups (Martin, 1994, p. 14)", which signifies the interplay of several cultural frames that lead to flexible, dynamic, and innovative outcomes. An international environment hosting numerous different identities coupled with sojourners' multiple and changing social and personal identity positions contribute to the complexity of identity adjustment and change process during the sojourn. Positionality of the informants of this study depicts a multifaceted picture at the junction of their already acquired socio-cultural capital, host country socio-cultural environment and the existence of numerous actors such as locals, short-term and/or long-term international students as well as migrants from Turkey. From a more traditional and essentialist point of view, it could be expected that students' national and/or religious ties would be a determining factor for well-being during the sojourn; however, the outcome of this research does not point at this direction. Even if mutual socio-cultural identity and belonging may be important for adjustment as suggested by former research, individual/ personal characteristics demonstrate that there are strategic, personal decisions and preferences that affect students' positionality and identification during the sojourn.

Firstly, in line with former studies, student experiences address the existence of distinct international and/or exchange student identities which establish distinct mutual spaces and can be reviewed as part of a transnational youth culture due to the existence of spaces, contacts, and tools across national boundaries. Along similar lines, this space is also believed to contribute to a generation that is "more rootless, more eager to go far corners of the earth and more aware of the world".²⁵ Secondly, in some cases, students are reviewed as mere

²⁵A pamphlet of the Erasmus Student Network-Sweden (2007) read the following: "Evolution is inevitable. Beware, because the future is here to stay and only the strongest will survive. Generation mobility is here to stay. Our generation has often been referred to as Generation Mobility. And we are. More rootless, more eager to go to far corners of the earth and more aware of our own world. It's time to rewrite the evolutionary theory. Darwin's theory doesn't apply to us anymore. The future is spelled Homo Erasmus."

representatives of a particular nation or culture by their home or host country environments, often times being treated as cultural emissaries.²⁶ However, as can be reviewed from the respondents of this study as well as breadth of former research, other forms of universal and strategic identities may become more significant than national and ethnic identities. Thirdly, the contrasting images of local migrant youth and temporary exchange students from Turkey reflect the complexities of the identity concept. These two groups are quite distinct even if they share a common language and cultural heritage. As suggested by Schmitt (2014), there are different identity constructions between the two groups, both towards each other and taking into consideration the local and international communities: Turkish-Dutch are viewed as much more traditionalistic and conservative whereas exchange students from Turkey are viewed to be more modern and become part of the international group of students. So, in an intercultural environment of international students coming from different countries and regions of the world, the distinction between residents/citizens with Turkish descent and exchange students from Turkey emerge as an important line of differentiation which again demonstrates the complicated nature of identity (re)constructions. Even if informants have a background with previous international experiences and basic skills in intercultural competence as well as weak ethnic and religious affiliation, they may still prefer to position/identify themselves differently compared to the migrants from Turkey who are usually associated with traditional/conservative values by different parties. Moreover, considering the background of participants with prior international and/or intercultural awareness, pretty atypical for the Turkish context as well, it must be added that at the nexus of numerous identities, issues still emerge during the course of the sojourn; however, students seem to be able to cope and manage these with their prior experiences. For instance, informants were not feeling comfortable due to questions about their home domain issues (their difference from migrant Turks, current socio-political concerns, safety, pop culture and daily routines); however, they manage well by mostly underlining their modern and liberal orientations.

Due to the short term, temporary characteristics of the sojourn experience, existence of strong transnational ties, increasing importance of a sojourner identity, and the influence of other ethnic, religious and national realities, it is essential to consider approaches that study the existence and interaction of multiple and diverse identities. Identity Negotiation Theory

²⁶ Throughout the years in which the Erasmus program has been implemented in Turkey, it has been possible to observe students who received orientation about Turkey's foreign policy so that they know how/what to present abroad.

(INT) offers a useful ground to consider the interplay of different identities. According to Ting-Toomey (2015, p. 5) “Individuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment.” It is possible to suggest that during the sojourn students face different and unfamiliar contexts which affect their secure image of themselves through experienced socio-cultural and academic difficulties as well as language barrier. At the same time, it is possible to suggest a powerful exchange student and transnational youth identity during the sojourn. In crafting creative and flexible solutions for strategic identity self-presentation (Ting-Toomey, 2015), participants of this study did not demonstrate strong and distinct identification with their nationality, religion, and ethnicity. Rather, more universal and human identities, especially in the form of exchange student identity as well as academic/professional identities seem to have offered new opportunities to cling on to through social media, travels, and on site experiences during the sojourn. Ting-Toomey (2015, pp. 4-5) suggests “Desired identity outcomes can include mutual identity understanding, identity respect, and conjoint identity valuation and satisfaction. ... Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels.” From this perspective and considering the many identities that students have, we can conclude that students have the motivation towards a negotiation that makes them feel secure, included, connected and promotes predictability and consistency in a foreign environment. For instance, if being Turkish, religious, Muslim etc. leads to exclusion and insecurity then it is professional and social identities that one adheres to. This is the reason why students may feel disconnected to other students with whom they share a common cultural heritage, religion and language. From another perspective, the mutual international/exchange student identity, also reinforced by international student bodies, provide a sense of security, support, and visibility which makes it an important one to ascribe to. Additionally, students establish networks and connections around the international/exchange student identity that actually last longer than the sojourn experience and continue over new media tools as well as actual visits which suggests a more permanent identification.

Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

Data collection took place in a rather unconventional period in Turkey. The state of emergency was announced over the course of the summer of 2017, few months before data collection started, after the attempted coup of July 15th. In such an environment of uncertainty the responsiveness of the institutions and respondents has been lower than expected, so the sample size is small. In addition, the large drop out after the pretest was another concern. For these reasons, data collection was revisited and revised and the post-test became more detailed with the inclusion of more semi-structured questions to detail out student experience. Additionally, participants with more diverse backgrounds and orientations would bring richness to the study. Due to the number and background of the respondents the results cannot be generalized.

One other limitation may be the different semester dates of countries and institutions which translate into numerous departure and arrival dates. For this reason, not each and every respondent has taken the survey at the same time. One other important issue, as is the case with many learning opportunities, students may realize the gains after some time passes and actually having reintegrated back to their daily routine. An important follow up may be to evaluate respondents' circumstances and experience after a certain period. It would be interesting to study how their approach to the experience and afore-mentioned themes change in time, especially after graduation as they advance in their careers.

As a final note, Erasmus is currently the most popular study abroad program implemented in the country; however, other forms of programs such as exchange/study abroad with non-European destinations as well as dual/joint degree programs are also being offered by some institutions. A study focusing on these programs and in a comparative fashion might be helpful to better reflect on the global education field and participating students' competencies.

6.2 Conclusion

Implications of the Program

Educational processes claim to deliver certain positive outcomes to the involved stakeholders and success is the expected outcome with every educational activity. What does success mean in the Erasmus program, the pioneer of the European education and training programs? Attaining high grades, being able to attend a reputable institution, being able to survive in an unfamiliar setting, developing/learning a language, attaining control of one's own life, meeting the romance of your life, freedom to travel, representing the country of origin well, self-management and knowledge... The range of answers is not exhaustive and can be further extended. It is difficult to frame an ultimate answer in the case of global education opportunities since they involve dynamics across different socio-cultural realities, not always involved with curricular interventions or components. DeNobile, Kleeman & Zarkos (2014) propose that global education reflects two strands of progressive education; the first is focused on the development of the individual and the student's experiences (Dewey, 1916) and the other is concerned with creating a more just and equitable society (Freire, 1972). Erasmus exchange relates to these two strands since it is experiential and leads to multifaceted progress and secondly, as a result of intercultural interactions, participants report increased understanding and empathy which are prerequisites for democracy.

Personal and cultural growth became bold in this research, too. Considering the background and previous international experiences of the respondents, we could easily infer that the significance of personal and cultural gains would be minor; however, financial support granted by the European Commission and the level/nature of socio-cultural diversity in a given locale make the whole experience unique. Travelling internationally is still costly from Turkey to different European destinations due to visa procedures as well as cost of living abroad. For this reason, receiving the European mobility grant as well as having acquired a residence permit/long-term visa are important motivations besides living independently (most of them had reported to be living with their families back at home). Studies on youth in Turkey generally underline the dominance of conservative values, benefitting from limited socio-cultural opportunities as well as prejudices towards certain groups (Uyan Semerci, Erdoğan & Önal, 2017; Next Generation Türkiye Report, 2017). Against this backdrop, every opportunity for experiencing cultural diversity and exchange that leads to self-awareness and management as well as cultural awareness is essential for different parts of the society.

Based on student narratives and answers, the host schools' international character and other local students' prior international and intercultural experiences are crucial. It is common to observe special events and arrangements for international/exchange students with the help of former exchange/international students; however, effective intercultural encounters can only be sustained with the presence of local and foreign students acquiring international and intercultural worldviews. Students who are already volunteering and/or helping sojourners are mostly former international students who are already open and willing to establish and sustain different cultural encounters whereas students should also face and come into contact with more closed circles for real diversity and challenge. One other related issue is that in such a group of respondents with considerable prior experience and awareness, one would expect to find stronger engagement with international and/or local students during exchange about encountered difficulties; however, connection with the home country domains (family and friends) was strong especially during difficult times. Also, there was no mention of the home country institution and respective actors during difficult times. This situation may be due to the short period as well as strong presence of foreign student bodies.

Re-entry/reverse culture shock is an important and understudied dimension of the sojourn experience, generally resulting in stress and estrangement, due to a number of personal, social and cultural situations in the aftermath of the experience (Brubaker, 2017; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2014; Young, 2014). Institutions, to better ease the reintegration phase, could provide tools and means for formally and informally evaluating the global education experience which would in turn connect the experience to students' continuing studies, future plans as well as supporting other mobile or immobile students. As Lo (2006) states, peer advising has been an increasingly popular part of study abroad in the recent years, also suggested by international exchange organizations as a method for both promoting study abroad and countering reverse culture shock. Re-entry was also an issue for few informants of this study. They reported having developed a critical stance towards the home domain and were comparing home-host domains as well as stating family-friends' thoughts about their reintegration. One aspect that can be shared from years of experience in the field is that youth may be reluctant in sharing their experiences with other students towards creating better engagement as well as reflection due to encountered difficulties during the process, not having spent a successful experience, approaching the experiences in a more consumerist way, being overwhelmed with responsibilities upon return, and having a strong sense of entitlement. For these reasons as well as other procedural and structural burdens, it may be a challenge to design and implement programs after the sojourn. Institutions in Turkey should

be able to establish mechanisms and platforms, credit or non-credit, to mobilize different groups of students in a systematic way to foster learning for returning and prospective students.

Paradoxes of the Sojourn Experience

Altbach & Teichler (2001) discussed the long term developments and challenges regarding exchange programs and emphasized issues of diversifying participation, efficiency, accountability, funding, competition paradigm as well as exchange being a peripheral enterprise that also apply to the case in Turkey. Firstly, funding is increasingly becoming a concern for individuals and institutions especially with increasing financial worries and even the European Commission grants cannot be enough to sustain students and/or institutions. Secondly, most of the HEIs view international programs as peripheral activities rather than integral and central parts of educational and campus life. For instance, promotion and increasing student satisfaction are some concerns of this approach. Thirdly, in terms of efficiency, there are gaps between expectations and outcomes especially in academic terms as well as implementation level concerns. Program realities and outcomes are diverse based on many factors, as explained in the previous sections, and this difference puts pressure on some students and families who have completely different expectations or priorities. Additionally, as more institutions and individuals are involved, we observe not just the benefits but also mixed outcomes stemming from multiple reasons. From a project implementation aspect, it is a challenge to align budgetary, educational, and socio-cultural concerns to achieve expected results for individual institutions. Last but not the least, diversifying participation due to financial, academic, and socio-cultural reasons as well as supply-demand is a serious challenge. Taking into consideration afore-mentioned concerns, this sub-section focuses on concerns regarding efficiency in terms of implementation and outcomes, participation, consumerist approaches, and politics of difference.

One efficiency related issue concerns the value of immersion during the sojourn. Global opportunities may be referred to as being “immersion”, especially if they involve participants in the local lives in a multidimensional way. The positionality of exchange students depicts a complex picture and we cannot argue that the whole experience for all participants is immersion. For some of the informants of this study, one semester-long exchange can be framed as immersion because it is a totally new experience, students seem to enjoy and they have control over the experience. Moreover, they are mostly with foreign/international students whom they recently met. However, based on the level and nature of interaction to the local host culture, respondents’ experience may also not be

considered immersion due to following traits: Spending time with mostly foreign/international students in a confined atmosphere, doing mostly touristic trips and activities, receiving support from local students for official procedures that actually limit interaction with the locals. Also, there are no reported instances where experiences of negative cultural issues such as intolerance and prejudices were actually utilized as learning opportunities, which may be considered strong aspect of immersion. Another efficiency related concern is regarding the influence of the sojourn on the formation of European identity. Wilson (2011) discusses that former Erasmus students may be more pro-European than their peers because students who take part are already more pro-European and expecting the program to create Europhile 'Erasmus generations' seems to be unrealistic. In a similar fashion, discussing the effects of the program on European identity, Kuhn (2012) suggests the explanation that Erasmus exchange does not strengthen European identity since it addresses students who already feel European and misses reaching out to low educated individuals. In line with the findings of the afore-mentioned studies, the results of this research also suggest that participants already demonstrate some level of socio-cultural capital to survive in a foreign and multicultural setting (parents' education level, prior experience/travels etc.) and they mostly believe that Erasmus attendees must have acquired some academic, linguistic, and social skills to be able to attend and benefit from the program, even though the program benefits all attendees in one way or another.

Politics of difference (Doerr, 2017) can be traced in the experience of informants which creates a learning environment but at the same time separation across different spheres. Surely, a very basic aspect of the experience is making students live different routines and exposing them to different educational and social environments; however, the ways in which these differences are constructed, recognized and managed becomes crucial. For instance, politics of difference usually defines and reinforces the bold differences between home and host domains and reflects them as homogenous entities; however, it is also possible to trace politics of difference in personal and group relations, and negative instances. Firstly, the informants reported to be more separated with the locals and closer to other foreign/international students. Especially, the mutual exchange student identity may be considered to be built upon this concept of difference that is empowering the sojourners in some ways but at the same time creating an exclusionary space. Secondly, the way informants explain the different characteristics between migrants and exchange students from Turkey reflect a politics of difference; exchange students were associated with modernity and Western values and migrants with the tradition and religious conservatism. Thirdly,

“learning” as a result of lived differences was associated with positive outcomes of the program by the informants whereas “difference” was presented as a negative aspect in relation to faced prejudices and stereotypes. These negative instances could also very well be considered and managed as powerful learning tools; however, there was no mention of such an outlook or experience. Politics of difference was also evident in the ways home and host domains were actually depicted. Half of the post-test respondents mentioned that the home and host institutions were significantly different but most of them stated that the academic environment was as expected. Host domains were mostly explained with freedom, new knowledge, capabilities, and opportunities whereas home domains with comfort zone and the loved ones. Politics of difference can also be observed in the way some European destinations are observed as viable destinations by participants and their families in Turkey. For instance, families may be willing to support only if students go to conventionally popular study destinations like Germany and France. They may further advocate that students would not be able to have a strong experience in Eastern European countries or at institutions that are not very well known. Finally, Doerr (2017) discussed that some argue study abroad is for the privileged class to use the encounter with difference and global competence as a result, as a resource to build cultural capital which in turn reinforces differences in a given society. Considering the backgrounds of the informants of this study, as well as increasing financial and social concerns of attending the program, such an experience could very well contribute to a divide amongst the youth, at the expense of less privileged.

From a consumerist approach, the description and understanding of study abroad experiences as touristic packages may be more so for paid study abroad programs implemented across different US universities; however, there are certain patterns that apply to the exchange/sojourn experience of students from Turkey within the Erasmus program. Firstly, these programs become part of marketing/recruitment efforts even before students enter universities and institutional messages are the following: constantly establishing international connections and send more students each year. Secondly, having heard and observed their peers and/or university officials, students start having prescribed expectations about the socio-cultural and educational realities which may be distant to the real outlook and their coping skills. Thirdly, when students and families learn that they are supposed to carry out preparations for the sojourn on their own, they may become surprised, confrontational and state their expectations in terms of logistical support. Fourthly, beneficiaries may provide no feedback, reflection and/or support to their peers after the experience, thinking they have received their service. Finally, when selecting study destinations, students may determine

socio-culturally popular destinations which again points at the direction of partially seeing study abroad as a touristic time abroad. Having taken form during previous discussions with colleagues serving at different institutions for different positions, the feeling of entitlement emerged as an important issue and increasing trend in defining sojourners' attitudes and behaviors. Students may be dissatisfied with the schools, countries, cities, facilities, registered courses, new bureaucracy, grade conversions, credit transfers, claiming that they deserve a better experience and outcome. Naturally, there might have been difficult times and unexpected events during the course of the experience, however, these moments are also learning and development opportunities. We must always consider the tension between consumerist approaches and critical role of appropriate student advising and expectation management as well as development of flexible and diverse evaluation-placement methods for efficient and positive program implementation.

One other paradox is that the program may increasingly be not reaching a diverse audience in Turkey due to financial and social realities. The financial and security related concerns of the past year (Turkish Lira losing value against US Dollar (\$) and Euro (€) as well as increasing security issues that have been taking place in different European cities including Istanbul) have affected the global education scene in Turkey. Many countries have started to implement travel warnings and institutions/families have been reluctant to send their children to study abroad inbound and outbound. On the financial side, due to the unfavorable exchange rates and inadequacy of the mobility grants, students decide not to attend the program and cancel participation. In such an environment, only students who can incur the costs are able to attend. This in turn started to affect the number of students that can actually go abroad under the scheme of exchange partnerships. In line with the informal input received from the National Agency of Turkey and as can be observed from the field, almost all universities have the issue of drop outs after placing students. The reasons communicated by universities are usually visa related difficulties, family disapproval and having applied "just to try". What can be added at this point is that since families are usually the main sponsors for study abroad, their primary motivation may be financial. Families also think students may delay their studies and they may not get any gains by studying in some untraditional destinations. On another note, it was stated that students consider not applying to the program in the very first place due to economic and linguistic reasons, especially in East and South East of Turkey. This stance was also suggested by the National Agency 2009 Impact Study which underlined that more than 57% of non-mobile students consider financial issues to be the most important obstacle for mobility. This feedback strongly ties back to prior studies as

well as student narratives. As one student explained “even if students pass the language evaluation at home, paper work, flight and other expenses create serious burdens. Mobility grants help to an extent but they are not enough.” Socio-culturally speaking, it is also possible nowadays to observe more question marks amongst the more conservative circles of the society as to the effects of the program on traditional values. Having discussed the general acceptance and recognition of the Erasmus program all over the country albeit institutional, nation-wide, individual challenges and quality differences in implementation, in the recent years, it has become possible to read views that see Erasmus as a degenerative process imposed by the Western/developed countries towards educating youth ignorant of their “own” values. This view is different than the usual ongoing debates or the skeptical views pronounced since the initiation of the program in the country. According to the very recent study by British Council, Next Generation Türkiye (2017), planning to go abroad for work or study purposes is very common, especially amongst those who have a secular way of living, due to the despair arising from current socio-economic circumstances. Youth from different backgrounds believe in the value of such an experience but especially those who are more educated, more privileged in terms of socio-economic resources and unemployed have a stronger stance. Accordingly, most of the youth state they would come back home after an international experience and this seems to help balance the relations with their families. In Simon and Ainsworth’s (2012) study, quantitative and qualitative results suggest that students’ habitus, social networks, and cultural capital shape their study abroad experiences and that students with a positive predisposition toward internationalization (having foreign-born parents and/or experiencing different cultures overseas) were more likely to study abroad. In line with this study, a number of factors were stated to be contributing to the race and class disparities in study abroad participation such as possessing knowledge and background that complied with institutional standards, having family and friends who valued study abroad than were lower socioeconomic status and Black students, being better able to acquire and use cultural capital when accessing information from institutional agents. If finances become an increasing concern and socio-cultural division within the society grows, there may be a danger of only those more advantageous students benefitting from the program which is against the very rationale of the program to promote diversity and inclusion.

Few of the implementations that jeopardize the quality and quantity of participation in Turkey are the student selection/placement criteria and the issues of balance and setting partnerships in Europe. In Turkey, students are ranked and placed mainly in line with the following criteria: 50% GPA and 50% language score (+/- 10 points if there is prior

participation, disability etc. as announced by the Turkish National Agency annually).²⁷ So, there is a very general placement criterion that does not really take into consideration students' background, expectations, and targets vis-à-vis the host country/institution conditions. Additionally, since the program started to be implemented in 2004, numerous partnerships between European and Turkish institutions have already been established and it is becoming more difficult to establish new networks. This is even harder for smaller cities of Anatolia due to socio-cultural opportunities as well as linguistic barriers. There must be flexible and alternative implementations to be able to better match student and institution profiles as well as partnership processes which would focus on quality rather than just quantity and in turn affect the outcomes of the program.

Future Prospects

The Turkish National Agency Impact Study (2009) revealed that students' rate for satisfaction with their stay abroad rose up to 4.4 (out of 5) but their satisfaction with studies abroad remained stable at 3.9, which demonstrates the difference between academic and other venues. The sojourn does not become less important with the fact that academic expectations and outcomes seem to be secondary since some skills and knowledge can only be built on top of certain emotional and personal acquisitions. On the other hand, based on the experiences of participants and Erasmus program evaluations, alterations may need to be done that would lead to various more flexible program designs and pathways. If social, personal and cultural outcomes are more determining and student selections are still being implemented based on academic credentials (GPA and language score), then the content of the programs and procedures must be reviewed nationally and internationally. This way, better expectation management could be sustained and students would be directed to programs of their interest and need, which in turn would expand the learning value of these opportunities. For instance, there may be different sets of institutional opportunities and selection criteria may be different and more flexible, taking into account academic expectations, targets and/or prior experiences. From a more macro level perspective, the focus must diverge from achieving the greatest number of mobile students and international partnerships towards achieving quality implementations that maximize personal, academic, cultural and/or social growth. Additionally, these programs must be framed and presented as learning and development opportunities rather than mere marketing and/or travel opportunities as opposed to what the consumerist approaches promote.

²⁷ National Agency of Turkey updates/publishes an Implementation Guide every year and the documents maps out all program rules in detail.

The Erasmus+ Generation, representatives from respective participating countries, suggested 30 concrete proposals on the future of the Erasmus+ program beyond 2020. These suggestions included the following issues in relation to intercultural competence: a more welcoming Europe and inclusive society, 21st century skills, recognition of soft skills such as adaptability, cultural understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving and communication skills as much as formal learning outcomes, more integration at host locations to develop language and intercultural communication skills, promotion of alumni networks (Erasmus Generation Declaration, 2017). These suggestions stated by different representatives of the program countries confirm the need to review implementations to achieve more efficient outcomes by addressing socio-cultural aspects and recognition of skills and learning that fall outside of formal learning practices.

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Appendices:

1- Host institutions as reported by the respondents

France:

EDHEC Business School
France Business School
IESEG School of Management
L'université Paris V Descartes
Sciences Po
Universite de Strasbourg

Germany:

Augsburg Hochschule
Berlin Technical University
Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg
European Business School - EBS
European University Viadrina
Hamburg University, Germany
Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg
Hochschule für Öffentliche Verwaltung Kehl
Hochschule Rhein Waal
Institute of Sociology
International University of Applied Sciences - Bad Honnef
Kehl University
TU Dortmund
University of Mannheim

Poland:

AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland
Gdansk University of Technology, Poland
Lodz University, Poland
Politechnika Lodz, Poland

The Netherlands:

Fontys Hogescholen
Hogeschool van Amsterdam
Inholland University of Applied Sciences
Leiden University
Maastricht University
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences
The Hague University of Applied Sciences
Tilburg University
TU Delft
Utrecht University
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Wageningen University

Other:

Malardalen Högskola, Sweden
Technical University of Liberec, Czech Republic
University of Economics and Management, Czech Republic

2- ANOVA Results

Foundation-Private University

A2.1 Ethnic Identification Scale		N	M	SD	p
I speak Turkish.	Public	9	2.22	1.39	.288
	Private	39	2.74	1.29	
	Total	48	2.65	1.31	
I am a Muslim	Public	9	.67	.50	.087
	Private	39	1.23	.93	
	Total	48	1.13	.89	
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	Public	9	1.33	1.41	.081
	Private	39	2.21	1.30	
	Total	48	2.04	1.35	
I know a lot about my religion.	Public	9	.89	.78	.393
	Private	39	1.21	1.03	
	Total	48	1.15	.99	
I was born from Turkish parents.	Public	9	2.78	1.09	.661
	Private	39	2.97	1.22	
	Total	48	2.94	1.19	
I was raised as a Turkish person.	Public	9	2.00	1.41	.042*
	Private	39	2.97	1.22	
	Total	48	2.79	1.30	
I look Turkish.	Public	9	1.11	.93	.189
	Private	39	1.62	1.04	
	Total	48	1.52	1.03	
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	Public	9	1.44	1.33	.069*
	Private	39	2.31	1.24	
	Total	48	2.15	1.29	
Turkish history means a lot to me.	Public	9	1.33	1.00	.037*
	Private	39	2.36	1.35	
	Total	48	2.17	1.34	

A2.2 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	1	9	3.67	1.00	.603
	2	39	4.05	2.14	
	Total	48	3.98	1.97	
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	1	9	3.22	1.20	.324
	2	39	3.92	2.02	
	Total	48	3.79	1.90	
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R	1	9	5.44	1.24	.750
	2	39	5.26	1.65	
	Total	48	5.29	1.57	
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R	1	9	6.11	1.05	.729
	2	39	6.26	1.14	
	Total	48	6.23	1.12	
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R	1	9	5.78	1.64	.762
	2	39	5.95	1.49	
	Total	48	5.92	1.50	
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	1	9	3.78	1.72	.462
	2	39	4.28	1.86	
	Total	48	4.19	1.83	
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	1	9	4.22	1.56	.156
	2	39	5.15	1.79	
	Total	48	4.98	1.77	

A2.3 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.R	Public	9	6.33	1.32	.304
	Private	39	5.72	1.65	
	Total	48	5.83	1.60	
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.R	Public	9	6.44	1.67	.359
	Private	39	5.95	1.40	
	Total	48	6.04	1.44	
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.R	Public	9	7.00	.00	.027*
	Private	39	6.10	1.17	
	Total	48	6.27	1.11	
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	Public	9	6.00	1.32	.082*
	Private	39	5.03	1.51	
	Total	48	5.21	1.52	
I have many friends from my own country.	Public	9	5.78	2.17	.507
	Private	39	5.33	1.71	
	Total	48	5.42	1.78	
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	Public	9	4.56	2.30	.735
	Private	39	4.31	1.89	
	Total	48	4.35	1.95	
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	Public	9	5.78	1.64	.550
	Private	39	5.41	1.65	
	Total	48	5.48	1.64	
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	Public	9	5.33	1.58	.905
	Private	39	5.26	1.76	
	Total	48	5.27	1.71	
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	Public	9	5.33	1.73	.702
	Private	39	5.08	1.81	
	Total	48	5.13	1.78	
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	Public	9	6.00	1.23	.153
	Private	39	4.95	2.08	
	Total	48	5.15	1.98	
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	Public	9	4.78	1.99	.503
	Private	39	4.28	1.99	
	Total	48	4.38	1.98	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	Public	9	6.00	1.58	.241
	Private	39	5.31	1.58	
	Total	48	5.44	1.58	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	Public	9	4.89	2.03	.133
	Private	39	3.85	1.80	
	Total	48	4.04	1.87	
My best friends are from my country.	Public	9	5.56	1.81	.660
	Private	39	5.26	1.83	
	Total	48	5.31	1.81	

A2.4 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)		N	M	SD	p
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	Public	9	4.22	1.86	.099
	Private	39	5.26	1.62	
	Total	48	5.06	1.69	
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	Public	9	5.11	.93	.717
	Private	39	4.95	1.26	
	Total	48	4.98	1.19	
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	Public	9	4.89	1.69	.383
	Private	39	5.33	1.28	
	Total	48	5.25	1.36	
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	Public	9	5.11	.78	.546
	Private	39	4.82	1.37	
	Total	48	4.88	1.28	
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	Public	9	3.89	1.76	.011*
	Private	39	5.31	1.36	
	Total	48	5.04	1.53	
When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	Public	9	6.00	.71	.791
	Private	39	5.90	1.09	
	Total	48	5.92	1.03	
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	Public	9	5.11	.78	.452
	Private	39	5.49	1.43	
	Total	48	5.42	1.33	
When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	Public	9	5.00	1.94	.700
	Private	39	5.23	1.53	
	Total	48	5.19	1.59	
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	Public	9	5.00	1.12	.590
	Private	39	4.69	1.61	
	Total	48	4.75	1.52	
I have a large network of professional contacts.	Public	9	4.11	1.62	.474
	Private	39	4.56	1.71	
	Total	48	4.48	1.69	
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	Public	9	3.11	1.69	.127
	Private	39	4.08	1.68	
	Total	48	3.90	1.70	
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	Public	9	3.78	1.20	.047*
	Private	39	4.79	1.38	
	Total	48	4.60	1.39	
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	Public	9	5.00	1.32	.432
	Private	39	5.36	1.20	
	Total	48	5.29	1.22	
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	Public	9	5.11	1.54	.987
	Private	39	5.10	1.45	
	Total	48	5.10	1.45	
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	Public	9	5.67	1.58	.762
	Private	39	5.54	1.02	
	Total	48	5.56	1.13	

A2.5 Cultural Intelligence		N	M	SD	p
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	Public	9	5.78	1.20	.300
	Private	39	6.18	.99	
	Total	48	6.10	1.04	
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	Public	9	6.00	1.32	.172
	Private	39	6.41	.64	
	Total	48	6.33	.81	
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	Public	9	6.00	1.12	.023*
	Private	39	6.64	.63	
	Total	48	6.52	.77	
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	Public	9	5.00	1.58	.046*
	Private	39	5.95	1.17	
	Total	48	5.77	1.29	
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	Public	9	5.89	1.36	.940
	Private	39	5.92	1.20	
	Total	48	5.92	1.22	
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	Public	9	4.11	2.03	.023*
	Private	39	5.46	1.43	
	Total	48	5.21	1.62	
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Public	9	4.44	1.74	.191
	Private	39	5.21	1.51	
	Total	48	5.06	1.56	
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	Public	9	5.56	1.24	.548
	Private	39	5.79	1.03	
	Total	48	5.75	1.06	
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	Public	9	5.89	1.27	.251
	Private	39	5.36	1.22	
	Total	48	5.46	1.24	
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Public	9	5.67	1.23	.613
	Private	39	5.41	1.39	
	Total	48	5.46	1.35	
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	Public	9	5.67	.87	.712
	Private	39	5.82	1.17	
	Total	48	5.79	1.11	
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	Public	9	5.00	2.18	.198
	Private	39	5.79	1.51	
	Total	48	5.65	1.66	

A2.6 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure		N	M	SD	p
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	Public	8	3.50	2.00	.633
	Private	34	3.82	1.64	
	Total	42	3.76	1.69	
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	Public	8	3.00	1.69	.544
	Private	34	3.44	1.86	
	Total	42	3.36	1.82	
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	Public	8	2.75	.89	.047*
	Private	34	4.03	1.69	
	Total	42	3.79	1.65	
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	Public	8	3.00	1.51	.335
	Private	34	3.65	1.72	
	Total	42	3.52	1.69	
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	Public	8	3.13	1.25	.038*
	Private	34	4.47	1.66	

I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	Total	42	4.21	1.67	.132
	Public	8	2.25	.89	
	Private	34	3.35	1.97	
	Total	42	3.14	1.86	

A2.7 Multicultural Ideology Scale		N	M	SD	p
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	Public	8	5.88	1.89	.831
	Private	34	5.74	1.60	
	Total	42	5.76	1.64	
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	Public	8	5.75	1.83	.511
	Private	34	5.29	1.73	
	Total	42	5.38	1.74	
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.rev	Public	8	5.75	2.12	.459
	Private	34	5.21	1.79	
	Total	42	5.31	1.84	
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	Public	8	5.38	1.77	.240
	Private	33	4.39	2.15	
	Total	41	4.59	2.09	
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	Public	8	5.75	2.05	.065*
	Private	34	4.29	1.93	
	Total	42	4.57	2.01	
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	Public	8	5.25	1.67	.120
	Private	34	4.09	1.90	
	Total	42	4.31	1.89	
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	Public	8	4.38	1.69	.524
	Private	34	3.91	1.87	
	Total	42	4.00	1.82	
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	Public	8	5.50	2.07	.817
	Private	34	5.65	1.49	
	Total	42	5.62	1.59	
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	Public	8	5.13	1.96	.972
	Private	34	5.15	1.50	
	Total	42	5.14	1.57	
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	Public	8	6.25	2.12	.243
	Private	34	5.53	1.40	
	Total	42	5.67	1.56	

Gender

A2.8 Ethnic Identification Scale		N	M	SD	p
I speak Turkish.	M	9	2.44	1.51	.615
	F	39	2.69	1.28	
	Total	48	2.65	1.31	
I am a Muslim	M	9	1.11	.93	.959
	F	39	1.13	.89	
	Total	48	1.13	.89	
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	M	9	2.00	1.12	.920
	F	39	2.05	1.41	
	Total	48	2.04	1.35	
I know a lot about my religion.	M	9	1.00	.87	.629
	F	39	1.18	1.02	
	Total	48	1.15	.99	
I was born from Turkish parents.	M	9	2.89	1.45	.894
	F	39	2.95	1.15	
	Total	48	2.94	1.19	
I was raised as a Turkish person.	M	9	2.22	1.48	.148
	F	39	2.92	1.24	
	Total	48	2.79	1.30	
I look Turkish.	M	9	1.67	.87	.643
	F	39	1.49	1.07	
	Total	48	1.52	1.03	
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	M	9	1.89	1.27	.513
	F	39	2.21	1.30	
	Total	48	2.15	1.29	
Turkish history means a lot to me.	M	9	2.33	1.41	.684
	F	39	2.13	1.34	
	Total	48	2.17	1.34	

A2.9 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)		N	M	SD	p
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	M	9	5.44	1.94	.459
	F	39	4.97	1.65	
	Total	48	5.06	1.69	
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	M	9	4.78	1.09	.580
	F	39	5.03	1.22	
	Total	48	4.98	1.19	
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	M	9	4.56	1.33	.089
	F	39	5.41	1.33	
	Total	48	5.25	1.36	
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	M	9	4.22	1.30	.090
	F	39	5.03	1.25	
	Total	48	4.88	1.28	
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	M	9	5.00	1.41	.929
	F	39	5.05	1.57	
	Total	48	5.04	1.53	
When planning a trip abroad. I use various sources of information.	M	9	5.67	1.00	.424
	F	39	5.97	1.04	
	Total	48	5.92	1.03	
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	M	9	5.78	.83	.373
	F	39	5.33	1.42	
	Total	48	5.42	1.33	
When I join a group for the first time. I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	M	9	4.67	2.12	.281
	F	39	5.31	1.45	
	Total	48	5.19	1.59	
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	M	9	4.44	2.07	.510
	F	39	4.82	1.39	
	Total	48	4.75	1.52	
I have a large network of professional contacts.	M	9	4.44	2.30	.946
	F	39	4.49	1.55	
	Total	48	4.48	1.69	
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	M	9	4.00	2.18	.841
	F	39	3.87	1.61	
	Total	48	3.90	1.70	
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	M	9	4.56	1.51	.909
	F	39	4.62	1.39	
	Total	48	4.60	1.40	
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	M	9	5.11	1.17	.627
	F	39	5.33	1.24	
	Total	48	5.29	1.22	
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	M	9	4.78	1.39	.459
	F	39	5.18	1.47	
	Total	48	5.10	1.45	
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	M	9	5.00	1.23	.097
	F	39	5.69	1.08	
	Total	48	5.56	1.13	

A2. 10 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure		N	M	SD	p
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group. such as its history, traditions, and customs.	M	7	4.00	1.53	.689
	F	35	3.71	1.74	
	Total	42	3.76	1.69	
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	M	7	3.29	1.98	.911
	F	35	3.37	1.82	
	Total	42	3.36	1.82	
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	M	7	3.29	1.60	.385
	F	35	3.89	1.66	
	Total	42	3.79	1.65	
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	M	7	3.71	2.06	.748
	F	35	3.49	1.63	
	Total	42	3.52	1.69	
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	M	7	5.00	1.63	.173
	F	35	4.06	1.64	
	Total	42	4.21	1.66	
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	M	7	2.71	2.22	.510
	F	35	3.23	1.80	
	Total	42	3.14	1.86	
A2.11 Multicultural Ideology Scale		N	M	SD	p
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	M	7	5.00	1.83	.180
	F	35	5.91	1.58	
	Total	42	5.76	1.64	
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	M	7	5.14	1.77	.697
	F	35	5.43	1.75	
	Total	42	5.38	1.74	
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	M	7	5.71	1.38	.531
	F	35	5.23	1.93	
	Total	42	5.31	1.84	
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	M	7	4.86	2.12	.712
	F	34	4.53	2.12	
	Total	41	4.59	2.10	
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	M	7	3.86	1.86	.310
	F	35	4.71	2.04	
	Total	42	4.57	2.01	
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	M	7	4.29	.95	.971
	F	35	4.31	2.04	
	Total	42	4.31	1.89	
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	M	7	3.29	1.70	.261
	F	35	4.14	1.83	
	Total	42	4.00	1.82	
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	M	7	5.71	1.38	.865
	F	35	5.60	1.65	
	Total	42	5.62	1.59	
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	M	7	4.86	1.22	.604
	F	35	5.20	1.64	
	Total	42	5.14	1.57	

Minorities who live in Turkey	M	7	5.29	1.70	.485
should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	F	35	5.74	1.54	
	Total	42	5.67	1.56	

A2.12 Acculturative role of home and host domains

		N	M	SD	p
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	M	9	3.56	2.51	.481
	F	39	4.08	1.86	
	Total	48	3.98	1.97	
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	M	9	3.67	2.29	.829
	F	39	3.82	1.83	
	Total	48	3.79	1.90	
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R	M	9	5.89	1.27	.209
	F	39	5.15	1.62	
	Total	48	5.29	1.57	
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R	M	9	5.89	1.69	.315
	F	39	6.31	.95	
	Total	48	6.23	1.12	
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R	M	9	5.33	1.73	.199
	F	39	6.05	1.43	
	Total	48	5.92	1.50	
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	M	9	4.22	2.54	.950
	F	39	4.18	1.67	
	Total	48	4.19	1.83	
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	M	9	5.11	2.15	.807
	F	39	4.95	1.70	
	Total	48	4.98	1.77	

A2.13 Acculturative Role of home and host domains

		N	M	SD	p
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.R	M	9	5.67	1.41	.733
	F	39	5.87	1.66	
	Total	48	5.83	1.60	
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.R	M	9	5.78	1.72	.549
	F	39	6.10	1.39	
	Total	48	6.04	1.44	
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.R	M	9	5.67	1.32	.068*
	F	39	6.41	1.02	
	Total	48	6.27	1.11	
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	M	9	5.11	1.27	.834
	F	39	5.23	1.58	
	Total	48	5.21	1.52	
I have many friends from my own country.	M	9	5.22	1.72	.721
	F	39	5.46	1.82	
	Total	48	5.42	1.79	
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	M	9	4.22	2.22	.825
	F	39	4.38	1.91	
	Total	48	4.35	1.95	
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	M	9	5.33	1.80	.770
	F	39	5.51	1.62	
	Total	48	5.48	1.64	
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	M	9	5.33	1.80	.905
	F	39	5.26	1.71	
	Total	48	5.27	1.71	
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	M	9	5.44	1.42	.556
	F	39	5.05	1.86	
	Total	48	5.13	1.78	
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	M	9	5.22	1.86	.899
	F	39	5.13	2.03	

	Total	48	5.15	1.98	
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	M	9	4.22	2.33	.800
	F	39	4.41	1.92	
	Total	48	4.38	1.98	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	M	9	5.44	1.67	.989
	F	39	5.44	1.59	
	Total	48	5.44	1.58	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	M	9	4.33	2.29	.609
	F	39	3.97	1.78	
	Total	48	4.04	1.87	
My best friends are from my country.	M	9	5.33	2.29	.970
	F	39	5.31	1.72	
	Total	48	5.31	1.81	

A2.14 Cultural Intelligence		N	M	SD	p
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	M	9	5.89	1.27	.495
	F	39	6.15	.99	
	Total	48	6.10	1.04	
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	M	9	6.11	1.27	.365
	F	39	6.38	.67	
	Total	48	6.33	.81	
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	M	9	6.44	1.01	.746
	F	39	6.54	.72	
	Total	48	6.52	.77	
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	M	9	5.56	1.33	.585
	F	39	5.82	1.29	
	Total	48	5.77	1.29	
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	M	9	5.67	1.32	.500
	F	39	5.97	1.20	
	Total	48	5.92	1.22	
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	M	9	5.11	1.83	.845
	F	39	5.23	1.60	
	Total	48	5.21	1.62	
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	M	9	4.44	1.59	.191
	F	39	5.21	1.54	
	Total	48	5.06	1.56	
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	M	9	5.33	1.23	.195
	F	39	5.85	1.01	
	Total	48	5.75	1.06	
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	M	9	4.78	1.09	.066*
	F	39	5.62	1.23	
	Total	48	5.46	1.24	
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	M	9	5.67	.87	.613
	F	39	5.41	1.45	
	Total	48	5.46	1.35	
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	M	9	5.56	.73	.485
	F	39	5.85	1.18	
	Total	48	5.79	1.11	
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	M	9	5.67	1.41	.967
	F	39	5.64	1.72	
	Total	48	5.65	1.66	

Pre-departure Orientation

A2.15 Ethnic Identification		N	M	SD	p
I speak Turkish.	Yes	10	2.50	1.08	.697
	No	38	2.68	1.38	
	Total	48	2.65	1.31	
I am a Muslim	Yes	10	.90	.74	.375
	No	38	1.18	.93	
	Total	48	1.13	.89	
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	Yes	10	2.00	1.49	.914
	No	38	2.05	1.34	
	Total	48	2.04	1.35	
I know a lot about my religion.	Yes	10	1.00	1.05	.606
	No	38	1.18	.98	
	Total	48	1.15	.99	
I was born from Turkish parents.	Yes	10	3.00	1.16	.855
	No	38	2.92	1.22	
	Total	48	2.94	1.19	
I was raised as a Turkish person.	Yes	10	2.60	1.17	.607
	No	38	2.84	1.35	
	Total	48	2.79	1.30	
I look Turkish.	Yes	10	1.20	1.03	.273
	No	38	1.61	1.03	
	Total	48	1.52	1.03	
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	Yes	10	1.60	1.17	.134
	No	38	2.29	1.29	
	Total	48	2.15	1.29	
Turkish history means a lot to me.	Yes	10	1.90	1.52	.486
	No	38	2.24	1.30	
	Total	48	2.17	1.34	

A2.16 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)		N	M	SD	P
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	Yes	10	4.80	1.48	.587
	No	38	5.13	1.76	
	Total	48	5.06	1.69	
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	Yes	10	5.20	.79	.517
	No	38	4.92	1.28	
	Total	48	4.98	1.19	
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	Yes	10	5.10	1.45	.700
	No	38	5.29	1.35	
	Total	48	5.25	1.36	
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	Yes	10	4.50	1.08	.304
	No	38	4.97	1.33	
	Total	48	4.88	1.28	
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	Yes	10	4.60	1.65	.310
	No	38	5.16	1.50	
	Total	48	5.04	1.53	
When planning a trip abroad. I use various sources of information.	Yes	10	6.00	.94	.777
	No	38	5.89	1.06	
	Total	48	5.92	1.03	
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	Yes	10	5.60	.97	.630
	No	38	5.37	1.42	
	Total	48	5.42	1.33	
When I join a group for the first time. I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	Yes	10	5.80	1.03	.174
	No	38	5.03	1.68	
	Total	48	5.19	1.59	
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	Yes	10	5.20	1.14	.299
	No	38	4.63	1.60	
	Total	48	4.75	1.52	
I have a large network of professional contacts.	Yes	10	5.90	1.20	.002*
	No	38	4.11	1.61	
	Total	48	4.48	1.69	
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	Yes	10	5.00	1.05	.020*
	No	38	3.61	1.73	
	Total	48	3.90	1.70	
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	Yes	10	4.90	1.20	.457
	No	38	4.53	1.45	
	Total	48	4.60	1.39	
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	Yes	10	5.40	.69	.756
	No	38	5.26	1.33	
	Total	48	5.29	1.22	
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	Yes	10	5.60	1.17	.227
	No	38	4.97	1.49	
	Total	48	5.10	1.45	
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	Yes	10	5.70	1.25	.670
	No	38	5.53	1.11	
	Total	48	5.56	1.13	

A2.17 Cultural Intelligence		N	M	SD	p
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	Yes	10	6.00	.82	.725
	No	38	6.13	1.09	
	Total	48	6.10	1.04	
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	Yes	10	6.30	.82	.885
	No	38	6.34	.82	
	Total	48	6.33	.81	
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	Yes	10	6.50	.85	.925
	No	38	6.53	.76	
	Total	48	6.52	.77	
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	Yes	10	5.70	1.49	.848
	No	38	5.79	1.26	
	Total	48	5.77	1.29	
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	Yes	10	5.80	1.75	.737
	No	38	5.95	1.06	
	Total	48	5.92	1.22	
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	Yes	10	5.50	1.43	.529
	No	38	5.13	1.68	
	Total	48	5.21	1.62	
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Yes	10	5.40	1.84	.449
	No	38	4.97	1.50	
	Total	48	5.06	1.56	
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	Yes	10	5.90	1.37	.621
	No	38	5.71	.98	
	Total	48	5.75	1.06	
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	Yes	10	5.40	1.35	.869
	No	38	5.47	1.22	
	Total	48	5.46	1.24	
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Yes	10	5.50	1.35	.914
	No	38	5.45	1.37	
	Total	48	5.46	1.35	
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	Yes	10	5.70	1.57	.773
	No	38	5.82	.98	
	Total	48	5.79	1.11	
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	Yes	10	6.20	1.03	.238
	No	38	5.50	1.77	
	Total	48	5.65	1.66	
A2.18 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure		N	M	SD	p
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	Yes	9	4.78	1.30	.041*
	No	33	3.48	1.70	
	Total	42	3.76	1.69	
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	Yes	9	3.44	1.33	.873
	No	33	3.33	1.95	
	Total	42	3.36	1.82	
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	Yes	9	3.44	1.24	.490
	No	33	3.88	1.75	
	Total	42	3.79	1.65	
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	Yes	9	4.11	1.69	.243
	No	33	3.36	1.67	
	Total	42	3.52	1.69	
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	Yes	9	4.78	1.39	.256
	No	33	4.06	1.71	
	Total	42	4.21	1.66	
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	Yes	9	3.44	1.51	.589
	No	33	3.06	1.95	
	Total	42	3.14	1.86	

A2.19 Multicultural Ideology Scale		N	M	SD	p
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	Yes	9	6.00	1.12	.180
	No	33	5.70	1.76	
	Total	42	5.76	1.64	
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	Yes	9	5.78	1.48	.697
	No	33	5.27	1.81	
	Total	42	5.38	1.74	
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	Yes	9	6.22	1.20	.531
	No	33	5.06	1.92	
	Total	42	5.31	1.84	
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	Yes	9	5.44	1.74	.712
	No	32	4.34	2.15	
	Total	41	4.59	2.09	
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	Yes	9	5.33	1.66	.310
	No	33	4.36	2.07	
	Total	42	4.57	2.01	
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	Yes	9	4.56	2.24	.971
	No	33	4.24	1.82	
	Total	42	4.31	1.89	
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	Yes	9	4.67	2.06	.261
	No	33	3.82	1.74	
	Total	42	4.00	1.82	
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	Yes	9	6.22	.83	.865
	No	33	5.45	1.72	
	Total	42	5.62	1.59	
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	Yes	9	5.89	1.05	.604
	No	33	4.94	1.64	
	Total	42	5.14	1.57	
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	Yes	9	6.11	1.45	.485
	No	33	5.55	1.58	
	Total	42	5.67	1.56	

A2.20 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	Yes	10	4.00	1.49	.971
	No	38	3.97	2.10	
	Total	48	3.98	1.97	
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	Yes	10	3.70	1.42	.866
	No	38	3.82	2.03	
	Total	48	3.79	1.90	
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R	Yes	10	5.00	1.33	.515
	No	38	5.37	1.63	
	Total	48	5.29	1.57	
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R	Yes	10	6.50	.71	.394
	No	38	6.16	1.20	
	Total	48	6.23	1.12	
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R	Yes	10	6.40	1.08	.256
	No	38	5.79	1.58	
	Total	48	5.92	1.50	
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	Yes	10	3.90	1.10	.582
	No	38	4.26	1.98	
	Total	48	4.19	1.83	
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	Yes	10	5.40	1.51	.403
	No	38	4.87	1.83	
	Total	48	4.98	1.77	
A2.21 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.R	Yes	10	5.30	1.89	.241
	No	38	5.97	1.52	
	Total	48	5.83	1.60	
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.R	Yes	10	5.90	1.45	.731
	No	38	6.08	1.46	
	Total	48	6.04	1.44	
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.R	Yes	10	6.30	.82	.927
	No	38	6.26	1.18	
	Total	48	6.27	1.11	
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	Yes	10	4.90	1.59	.475
	No	38	5.29	1.51	
	Total	48	5.21	1.52	
I have many friends from my own country.	Yes	10	5.80	1.32	.451
	No	38	5.32	1.89	
	Total	48	5.42	1.78	
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	Yes	10	4.80	1.99	.423
	No	38	4.24	1.95	
	Total	48	4.35	1.95	
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	Yes	10	5.30	1.16	.702
	No	38	5.53	1.75	
	Total	48	5.48	1.64	
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	Yes	10	4.70	1.95	.240
	No	38	5.42	1.64	
	Total	48	5.27	1.71	
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	Yes	10	4.40	1.84	.150
	No	38	5.32	1.74	

I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	Total	48	5.13	1.78	.429
	Yes	10	4.70	2.21	
	No	38	5.26	1.93	
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	Total	48	5.15	1.98	.965
	Yes	10	4.40	1.84	
	No	38	4.37	2.03	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	Total	48	4.38	1.98	.331
	Yes	10	5.00	1.70	
	No	38	5.55	1.55	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	Total	48	5.44	1.58	.501
	Yes	10	4.40	.97	
	No	38	3.95	2.04	
My best friends are from my country.	Total	48	4.04	1.87	.546
	Yes	10	5.00	1.33	
	No	38	5.39	1.93	
	Total	48	5.31	1.81	

Having done previous travel

A2.22 Ethnic Identification Scale		N	M	SD	P
I speak Turkish.	Yes	40	2.50	1.32	.085
	No	8	3.38	1.06	
	Total	48	2.65	1.31	
I am a Muslim	Yes	40	1.03	.77	.082
	No	8	1.63	1.30	
	Total	48	1.13	.89	
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	Yes	40	1.90	1.34	.105
	No	8	2.75	1.28	
	Total	48	2.04	1.35	
I know a lot about my religion.	Yes	40	1.05	.90	.135
	No	8	1.63	1.30	
	Total	48	1.15	.99	
I was born from Turkish parents.	Yes	40	2.78	1.23	.033*
	No	8	3.75	.46	
	Total	48	2.94	1.19	
I was raised as a Turkish person.	Yes	40	2.70	1.32	.281
	No	8	3.25	1.17	
	Total	48	2.79	1.30	
I look Turkish.	Yes	40	1.35	.98	.009*
	No	8	2.38	.92	
	Total	48	1.52	1.03	
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	Yes	40	2.10	1.28	.587
	No	8	2.38	1.41	
	Total	48	2.15	1.29	
Turkish history means a lot to me.	Yes	40	2.08	1.31	.295
	No	8	2.63	1.51	
	Total	48	2.17	1.34	

A2.23 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	Yes	40	3.90	1.93	.540
	No	8	4.38	2.26	
	Total	48	3.98	1.97	
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	Yes	40	3.70	1.88	.461
	No	8	4.25	2.05	
	Total	48	3.79	1.90	
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.R	Yes	40	5.25	1.52	.686
	No	8	5.50	1.93	
	Total	48	5.29	1.57	
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.R	Yes	40	6.30	.97	.331
	No	8	5.88	1.73	
	Total	48	6.23	1.12	
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.R	Yes	40	6.03	1.35	.268
	No	8	5.38	2.13	
	Total	48	5.92	1.50	
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	Yes	40	4.05	1.72	.248
	No	8	4.88	2.29	
	Total	48	4.19	1.83	
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	Yes	40	4.90	1.75	.494
	No	8	5.38	1.92	
	Total	48	4.98	1.77	

A2.24 Acculturative role of home and host domains		N	M	SD	p
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.rev	Yes	40	5.80	1.67	.751
	No	8	6.00	1.31	
	Total	48	5.83	1.60	
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.rev	Yes	40	5.98	1.51	.480
	No	8	6.38	1.06	
	Total	48	6.04	1.44	
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.rev	Yes	40	6.33	1.09	.454
	No	8	6.00	1.19	
	Total	48	6.27	1.11	
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	Yes	40	5.15	1.55	.557
	No	8	5.50	1.41	
	Total	48	5.21	1.52	
I have many friends from my own country.	Yes	40	5.30	1.84	.316
	No	8	6.00	1.41	
	Total	48	5.42	1.78	
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	Yes	40	4.23	1.99	.310
	No	8	5.00	1.69	
	Total	48	4.35	1.95	
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	Yes	40	5.33	1.70	.146
	No	8	6.25	1.04	
	Total	48	5.48	1.64	
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	Yes	40	5.00	1.74	.013*
	No	8	6.63	.52	
	Total	48	5.27	1.71	
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	Yes	40	4.85	1.81	.015*
	No	8	6.50	.76	
	Total	48	5.13	1.78	
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	Yes	40	4.95	2.04	.126
	No	8	6.13	1.36	
	Total	48	5.15	1.98	
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	Yes	40	4.10	1.87	.029*
	No	8	5.75	2.05	
	Total	48	4.38	1.98	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	Yes	40	5.33	1.56	.276
	No	8	6.00	1.69	
	Total	48	5.44	1.58	
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	Yes	40	4.05	1.71	.946
	No	8	4.00	2.67	
	Total	48	4.04	1.87	
My best friends are from my country.	Yes	40	5.15	1.73	.167
	No	8	6.13	2.10	
	Total	48	5.31	1.81	

A2.25 Cultural Intelligence		N	M	SD	p
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	Yes	40	6.20	.88	.154
	No	8	5.63	1.60	
	Total	48	6.10	1.04	
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	Yes	40	6.30	.85	.528
	No	8	6.50	.54	
	Total	48	6.33	.81	
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	Yes	40	6.53	.78	.934
	No	8	6.50	.76	
	Total	48	6.52	.77	
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	Yes	40	5.83	1.34	.522
	No	8	5.50	1.07	
	Total	48	5.77	1.29	
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	Yes	40	5.95	1.26	.676
	No	8	5.75	1.04	
	Total	48	5.92	1.22	
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	Yes	40	5.15	1.61	.583
	No	8	5.50	1.77	
	Total	48	5.21	1.62	
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Yes	40	5.10	1.55	.714
	No	8	4.88	1.73	
	Total	48	5.06	1.56	
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	Yes	40	5.73	1.11	.720
	No	8	5.88	.84	
	Total	48	5.75	1.06	
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	Yes	40	5.53	1.26	.410
	No	8	5.13	1.13	
	Total	48	5.46	1.24	
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	Yes	40	5.43	1.41	.707
	No	8	5.63	1.06	
	Total	48	5.46	1.35	
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	Yes	40	5.83	1.08	.647
	No	8	5.63	1.30	
	Total	48	5.79	1.11	
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	Yes	40	5.60	1.77	.673
	No	8	5.88	.99	
	Total	48	5.65	1.66	

A2.26 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)		N	M	SD	p
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	Yes	40	4.98	1.64	.429
	No	8	5.50	2.00	
	Total	48	5.06	1.69	
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	Yes	40	5.00	1.22	.790
	No	8	4.88	1.13	
	Total	48	4.98	1.19	
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	Yes	40	5.18	1.38	.399
	No	8	5.63	1.30	
	Total	48	5.25	1.36	
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	Yes	40	4.90	1.17	.766
	No	8	4.75	1.83	
	Total	48	4.88	1.28	
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	Yes	40	4.93	1.53	.241
	No	8	5.63	1.51	
	Total	48	5.04	1.53	
When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	Yes	40	5.90	1.03	.805
	No	8	6.00	1.07	
	Total	48	5.92	1.03	
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	Yes	40	5.35	1.39	.445
	No	8	5.75	1.04	
	Total	48	5.42	1.33	
When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	Yes	40	5.23	1.48	.720
	No	8	5.00	2.21	
	Total	48	5.19	1.59	
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	Yes	40	4.65	1.39	.314
	No	8	5.25	2.12	
	Total	48	4.75	1.52	
I have a large network of professional contacts.	Yes	40	4.40	1.58	.474
	No	8	4.88	2.23	
	Total	48	4.48	1.69	
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	Yes	40	3.78	1.61	.277
	No	8	4.50	2.14	
	Total	48	3.90	1.70	
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	Yes	40	4.53	1.45	.385
	No	8	5.00	1.07	
	Total	48	4.60	1.395	
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	Yes	40	5.23	1.25	.403
	No	8	5.63	1.06	
	Total	48	5.29	1.22	
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	Yes	40	5.08	1.39	.759
	No	8	5.25	1.83	
	Total	48	5.10	1.45	
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	Yes	40	5.48	1.18	.233
	No	8	6.00	.76	
	Total	48	5.56	1.13	

A2.27 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure		N	M	SD	p
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	Yes	35	3.71	1.66	.689
	No	7	4.00	2.00	
	Total	42	3.76	1.69	
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	Yes	35	3.26	1.74	.432
	No	7	3.86	2.27	
	Total	42	3.36	1.82	
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	Yes	35	3.66	1.59	.263
	No	7	4.43	1.90	
	Total	42	3.79	1.65	
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	Yes	35	3.49	1.56	.748
	No	7	3.71	2.36	
	Total	42	3.52	1.69	
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	Yes	35	4.09	1.56	.267
	No	7	4.86	2.12	
	Total	42	4.21	1.66	
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	Yes	35	3.09	1.76	.661
	No	7	3.43	2.44	
	Total	42	3.14	1.86	
A2.28 Multicultural Ideology Scale		N	M	SD	p
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	Yes	35	5.80	1.61	.740
	No	7	5.57	1.90	
	Total	42	5.76	1.64	
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	Yes	35	5.40	1.77	.876
	No	7	5.29	1.70	
	Total	42	5.38	1.74	
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	Yes	35	5.46	1.76	.250
	No	7	4.57	2.23	
	Total	42	5.31	1.84	
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	Yes	35	4.60	2.12	.916
	No	6	4.50	2.17	
	Total	41	4.59	2.09	
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	Yes	35	4.77	1.94	.152
	No	7	3.57	2.23	
	Total	42	4.57	2.01	
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	Yes	35	4.43	1.88	.369
	No	7	3.71	1.98	
	Total	42	4.31	1.89	
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	Yes	35	4.09	1.69	.502
	No	7	3.57	2.51	
	Total	42	4.00	1.82	
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	Yes	35	5.49	1.69	.229
	No	7	6.29	.76	
	Total	42	5.62	1.59	
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	Yes	35	5.06	1.63	.436
	No	7	5.57	1.27	
	Total	42	5.14	1.57	
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	Yes	35	5.57	1.63	.382
	No	7	6.14	1.07	
	Total	42	5.67	1.56	

F values of ANOVA tests conducted for pre-test scales taking into consideration having attended pre-departure orientation, gender, attending to public-private university, and international travels before the exchange. These independent variables were tested separately.

A2.29 Ethnic Identification				
<i>*significance at 95%, 46 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I speak Turkish.	.153	.257	1.158	3.094
I am a Muslim	.803	.003	3.065	3.168
I live in accordance with the Turkish norms and values.	.012	.010	3.181	2.732
I know a lot about my religion.	.270	.237	.743	2.316
I was born from Turkish parents.	.034	.018	.195	4.821*
I was raised as a Turkish person.	.269	2.165	4.376*	1.191
I look Turkish.	1.229	.218	1.778	7.497*
I am proud of my cultural heritage.	2.333	.435	3.456*	.299
Turkish history means a lot to me.	.493	.168	4.597*	1.122

A2.30 Multigroup Ethnic Identification				
<i>*significance at 95%, 41 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	4.469*	.163	.232	.163
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	.026	.013	.375	.629
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	.486	.771	4.220*	1.290
I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	1.404	.105	.953	.105
I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	1.329	1.923	4.628*	1.267
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	.297	.442	2.365	.195

A2.31 Test to Measure Intercultural Competence (TMIC)				
<i>*significance at 95%, 46 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
The way I address something depends on the person I am talking to.	.299	.558	2.833	.072
I know how other people feel without them having to tell me.	.427	.311	.133	.636
I find it easy to express my thoughts in words.	.151	3.009	.777	.089
I find it easy to view my behavior from other people's points of view.	1.083	2.994	.371	.725
I communicate in a foreign language even if I do not have a good command of the language.	1.055	.008	7.113*	.062
When planning a trip abroad, I use various sources of information.	.081	.650	.071	1.409
I spend a large part of my free time learning new things.	.235	.808	.576	.594
When I join a group for the first time, I quickly build relationships with the other group members.	1.903	1.188	.151	.130
I find it easy to position myself within a group.	1.105	.441	.294	.522
I have a large network of professional contacts.	10.813*	.005	.521	1.036
I spend a large part of my free time cultivating contacts.	5.851*	.041	2.420	.769
I am good at mediating between people who have conflicting interests.	.563	.013	4.147*	1.212
When working in a team I try to highlight the mutual benefits to others.	.098	.239	.628	.713
I make an effort to understand the extent to which my behavior is shaped by culture.	1.498	.558	.000	.096
I am aware of the cultural values and norms that influence my behavior.	.184	2.863	.093	1.458

A2.32 Cultural Intelligence
**significance at 95%, 46 degrees of freedom*

	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.	.125	.473	1.101	2.100
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.	.021	.835	1.923	.404
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	.009	.107	5.535*	.007
I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.	.037	.303	4.211*	.416
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	.114	.462	.006	.177
I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.	.402	.039	5.547*	.305
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	.584	1.760	1.760	.136
I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.	.248	1.732	.366	.131
I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.	.028	3.534*	1.352	.693
I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.	.012	.259	.259	.143
I know how different genders interact in other cultures.	.084	.496	.138	.213
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar.	1.426	.002	1.709	.181

A2.33 Acculturative Role of Home-Host Domains				
<i>*significance at 95%, 46 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I am proud of being a citizen of my country.	.001	.505	.274	.381
I am happy to be a citizen of my country.	.029	.047	.993	.553
Being part of a culture of my country is embarrassing to me.rev	.430	1.623	.103	.166
Being part of the host country culture is embarrassing to me.rev	.741	1.032	.122	.967
Being part of the host country culture is uncomfortable for me.rev	1.322	1.702	.093	1.260
Being part of culture of my country makes me feel happy.	.307	.004	.550	1.366
Being part of host country culture makes me feel happy.	.711	.060	2.076	.476

A2.34 Acculturative Role of Home-Host Domains				
<i>*significance at 95%, 46 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I find it difficult to make friends from my own country.rev	1.412	.118	1.080	.102
I find it difficult to make friends from the same sex.rev	.119	.365	.860	.507
I find it difficult to make friends from the opposite sex.rev	.009	3.481* (marginal)	5.251*	.571
My fellows from my own country are a pleasure to be with.	.518	.045	3.163* (marginal)	.351
I have many friends from my own country.	.578	.129	.448	1.026
I meet with people of my own country daily or almost daily.	.654	.050	.116	1.053
My relationship with people of my own country is warm.	.149	.086	.364	2.182
I can easily ask favors from people of my country.	1.420	.014	.014	6.755*
When I am in real trouble, it is to friends from my country that I go for help.	2.142	.351	.149	6.368*
I talk about personal matters with people from my country.	.636	.016	2.114	2.422
I participate actively in activities organized by people from my country.	.002	.065	.456	5.057*
Most of my relationships with people from my country are long-lasting.	.964	.000	1.410	1.217
Most of my relationships with people from my country are trouble- and tension-free.	.460	.266	2.345	.005
My best friends are from my country.	.371	.001	.196	1.970

A2.35 Multicultural Ideology Scale				
<i>*significance at 95%, 41 degrees of freedom</i>				
	Pre-departure Orientation	Gender	Public/private University	Previous travel
I believe people from Turkey should recognize the multiethnic composition of the society in the country.	.238	1.862	.046	.112
Ethnic minorities should be encouraged to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey.	.591	.154	.439	.025
People who live in Turkey should avoid the existence of numerous identities and focus on nurturing one common Turkish identity.R	2.949	.400	.560	1.362
A multicultural society is more able to resolve its problems.	1.982	.139	1.424	.011
The unity of a given nation would be weakened by people with different cultural backgrounds as their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties are strengthened.R	1.666	1.058	3.599* (marginal)	2.128
If people from different cultural subgroups wish to preserve their own culture, they should do this in a more preserved way.R	.190	.001	2.529	.827
A society that consists of a variety of cultural groups has more problems in terms of national unity than societies with one or two sub groups.R	1.556	1.302	.413	.459
Turkish people should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different cultural sub groups in Turkey.	1.671	.029	.054	1.491
Parents with minority backgrounds must encourage their children to learn and retain the culture and traditions of their own cultural heritage.	2.691	.273	.001	.620
Minorities who live in Turkey should assimilate into the Turkish culture.R	.932	.497	1.402	.782

Summary

This study was conducted to analyze the positionality of Erasmus study abroad students from Turkey in regards to intercultural competence, interplay of different identities, antecedent factors at different levels such as cultural capital of the participants and home-host domain factors. Consequently, the study was aimed to understand the dynamics of relating to the new destination/culture; creating and benefitting from intercultural experiences abroad and at home; orientation by the home and host institutions for adaptation and survival in a new place; communication skills; understanding/awareness of one's own culture, society and surroundings; existence of/benefitting from various social networks and support; approach towards learning (language, practical matters, relevant cultural information etc.). While doing so, the study also highlighted the uninterrupted concerns of the youth in Turkey as well as difficulties that emerge within the sphere of global education opportunities at the higher education level.

The main target population is outbound Erasmus students attending to higher education institutions in Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. 48 pre-test respondents, 22 post-test respondents were recruited between November 2016 and September 2017. During this period, seven respondents were either interviewed or presented with a set of open-ended questions based on their availability and preference. Most of the respondents were from foundation/private universities, 3rd or 4th year students, and female with an average age of 22. The orientation of universities and informants' study fields are diverse. A convergent mixed-methods research design was used; both quantitative and qualitative instruments (survey design, open-ended interview questions, semi-structured questions, social media) have been utilized for collecting and analyzing data. After conducting the surveys, interviews and social media observations were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques.

The first empirical chapter (Chapter 4) explores results of the pre-departure survey. These results suggested that respondents demonstrate universal values and approaches towards the socio-cultural world around them rather than a worldview that praises essentialist and conservative ties. They are mostly on the high end of being open-minded, communicative, and respectful towards cultural differences and how these differences affect their lives. Having said that they do not prioritize nationalistic, religious or ethnic identities, their relations to the co-nationals seem to be warm, continuous and satisfactory. Respondents mostly come from well-known public, private/foundation universities and secondary schools that may be considered more advantageous besides having educated parents and prior international experiences. For the afore-mentioned reasons, we can argue that this is an already culturally privileged group that uses the sojourn (Erasmus program) to extend their personal and social capital. This chapter also evaluated some of the intergroup differences based on antecedent factors. For two items of the Ethnic Identification Scale (looking Turkish and being born from Turkish parents) and three items of the acculturative role of home-host domains (easily asking favors from home country people, when in trouble asking help from home country nationals, participating actively in activities organized by home country people), the mean values for students without previous international travels were higher. Taking into consideration institutional differences, private university students had significantly higher means in three items of the Cultural Intelligence Scale. Regarding the acculturative role of home and host domains, public university students have more pleasure to be with the co-nationals. Items about cultivating contacts had higher means for those with

pre-departure orientation and two items about communication had higher means for private university students.

The second empirical chapter (Chapter 5) explores results of the post-departure assessment (qualitative and quantitative). Students who are experienced in terms of global opportunities, skills, and knowledge still have the chance to develop themselves considering the multisided and complex nature of intercultural competence. Informants of this study demonstrate that, also in line with former studies, language development, knowledge about different cultural facts, establishing contacts are the positive highlights of the experience whereas cultural biases and generalizations are adverse experiences. Host destination characteristics are important determinants for a successful sojourn experience and students generally share positive feedback except for a few incidents. Discovery and experiential learning describe the overall experience of the respondents which stretch out to personal, cultural, social and to an extent academic realm. These involve discovery about personal skills such as ability to survive alone, becoming aware of cultural differences and similarities, becoming aware of different academic resources, facing new realities, and becoming socially skilled to administer relations at different levels. Based on the quantitative analyses, we can conclude that informants' ethnic, national, religious identities as well as orientations do not demonstrate significant change since they already exhibit universal values and approaches that contradict with a traditional and conservative outlook. On the other hand, based on the qualitative analyses, we can conclude that there are numerous identity issues that play out such as the recognition and influence of sojourner/international student identity, juxtaposition of migrants and exchange students from Turkey even if they share a common cultural heritage, utilization of more strategic identities such as professional ones over the course of the sojourn, and significance of personal identities. Regarding the influence of antecedent factors, prior international experience, features of home and host domains, and support networks emerge as critical points.

This research suggests that program updates and country level implementations must be reviewed to be able to address more diverse needs and backgrounds. Even though there is rich literature on the positive and popular aspects of global education opportunities, it is also crucial to recognize more negative aspects as the visibility increases along with challenges such as diversifying participation, efficiency, accountability, funding, and competition as well as exchange being a peripheral enterprise of the institutions. Particularly, increasing financial worries, the status/recognition of global education programs in the eyes of beneficiaries (institutions and individuals), the difference between expectations and outcomes, politics of difference, and consumerist approaches seem to adversely affect the smooth functioning of international education programs.